

THE GRAMOPHONE

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Edited by
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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE Editor has blandly expressed his intention of not contributing to the February and March numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE, on the ground that he exceeded the time-limit of his leisure so seriously over the Quarterly Review of Records in the January number that he is confronted with the unavoidable demands of the novel which he is now writing, and must on no account be disturbed till he has finished it. There is nothing for his faithful but incompetent Helots in the London Office to do but to apologise to our readers on his behalf, and to assure them that though he cannot write for this nor, probably, for the next number of THE GRAMOPHONE, nor yet answer any of his correspondents personally, he will continue his Musical Autobiography in the April number, and will accompany or follow the next instalment of it with articles on Chamber Music Records and on the Caruso Records.

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If this is the Editor's idea of "gradually eliminating the personal element" from the pages of THE GRAMOPHONE, he has strangely mistaken the temper of his London staff. There are at least two sides to every question, and if Mr. Compton Mackenzie glories in the independence of his island home at Jethou, and prides himself upon his immunity from the cares and fogs of London, and from the assaults of outraged readers and gramophonic bores, he will have to submit to the indiscretions of those equally independent henchmen who slave at 25, Newman Street. It is an opportunity which they cannot resist. Regardless of the consequences the incompetent Helots become, in a flash, formidable Robots.

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We therefore beg to present to you, gentle reader, a portrait of the Editor. You may like to have it as much as we think you will—or you

may not. But that is immaterial. It is our gesture of malicious independence. The portrait is at any rate a good one, worthy of the great Yevonde; but we wish that it had been possible to obtain a photograph of the Editor in his kilt—somewhat in the style of a Raeburn—with the rocky background of his island; pipe in mouth, with one hand winding up his Orchestrathone, with the other commanding the waves to silence: his sheep-dog at his feet, greedily devouring the latest number of THE GRAMOPHONE.

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Someone with a bibliographical turn of mind said the other day, "Those early numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE with the Musical Autobiography in them are worth keeping. Whistler's lithographs of *The Forge* and the *Maundon Fish Shop*, which fetch three or four pounds each nowadays, were published as supplements to a penny paper." Nos. 2 and 4 of THE GRAMOPHONE are now almost unprocurable.

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But, seriously, the messages of goodwill which have poured into the office this last Christmas are enough to thrill anyone with the idea that THE GRAMOPHONE has somehow or other made the gramophone world into a huge happy family. You are, all of you, kind readers, the most delightful people; and when the Editor has time to read all your messages he will want to tell you so himself. Is there any other paper in the world which has received such a charming letter as that signed "J.R." on p. 190? Nor is it only the amateurs and subscribers who go out of their way to encourage us. The Trade greets our efforts with the same tolerance and kindness; and the following letters, which we have received permission to publish, testify to an appreciation of our aims with a sincerity that is almost a guarantee of their ultimate achievement.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

January 2nd, 1924.

DEAR SIR,—We would like to extend to you and the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE our best wishes for a happy and prosperous 1924.

We are prompted to do this by reason of the fact that the aims of your paper are identical with our expressed policy, namely, to elevate the standard of the gramophone and its music. Anything that makes for this end must have the cordial support of all who desire to see the gramophone a universal possession, and we believe the influence of Mr. Compton Mackenzie and his staff has made itself strongly felt in this direction.

We congratulate you upon the progress made in your first year and shall look with interest for further developments during 1924. With cordial good wishes.

Yours very truly,

Columbia Graphophone Company, Ltd.,

LOUIS STERLING, *Managing Director.*

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(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR MR. MACKENZIE,—We feel the New Year would not be well begun without a word of approval for THE GRAMOPHONE.

We value highly your painstaking efforts to help the public to a better appreciation of good music, and to assist the manufacturer to produce what that public desires.

The candour of your comments, if somewhat forcible, is none the less refreshing and informative because of their genuineness and honesty of purpose.

We must congratulate you especially on taking a new line in musical criticism, namely the value, from a price point of view, of the record offered, as well as its musical merit. This feature must be very acceptable to your readers, and it certainly is to us.

With best wishes for 1924.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

The Aeolian Company, Ltd.,

JOS. B. HENNESSY, *Sales Manager.*

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Three corrections of the January number must be made. In his Quarterly Review of Records (last paragraph) the Editor referred to Mr. Percy Scholes as Dr. Percy Scholes, and recommended his *Guide to Music*—already a classic—instead of his more recent *History of English Music*. Secondly, in the

answer to a correspondent (p. 167, col. 2), the *Death of Boris* records were especially commended without the additional information that they have been newly recorded by Chaliapin for H.M.V., with a much more effective chorus and orchestra than in the old discs, and are being issued this month. The words of these superb records were published in the Supplement of our November issue. Thirdly, the Editor was misled, by one who should have known better, as to the gong passage in *Tod und Verklärung* (Quarterly Review, p. 149, col. 2). He “looked in vain for the gong bit,” it is true; but it was *not* “lost in the general crash of the climax.” The passage occurs in a length of 14 bars which are omitted from the record.

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A SONG RECITAL

On Wednesday next, February 6th, **M. Nicolai Nadejin**, the Russian baritone, is giving a recital at the Aeolian Hall at 8.30 p.m. This recital, which will include songs by Falconieri, De Luca, de Falla, Borodin, Grechaninov, Moussorgsky, Rimsky Korsakov, Rachmaninov, etc., is being given under the auspices of THE GRAMOPHONE. The Editor has followed the career of M. Nadejin with the closest interest ever since he first met him just after the War, and wishes, by organising this recital for him, to draw the especial attention of all our readers to what he firmly believes to be one of the dozen finest operatic voices at present to be heard anywhere in the world. This is a strong statement; but anyone who knows the conditions under which operatic artists are handicapped at this time will appreciate the fact that it is by no means impossible for a really first-class singer to be comparatively unknown to the public. M. Nadejin has not merely a wonderful untrained voice. He studied at Rome under Signor Cortogni, the teacher of the De Reskes; he has given his life to his art; and recently a connoisseur who has the best right almost of anyone living to pronounce such a judgment, has stated that he considers M. Nadejin's voice the only voice of the present time worthy to be bracketed with that of Caruso, for the beauty and emotion of his art.

* * *

It is short notice, unfortunately. But any of our readers who will be able to go to the Aeolian Hall next Wednesday evening, and who will write to us enclosing a remittance, may have tickets at half the advertised prices which are 21s., 12s. 6d., 5s. 9d., and 3s. (unreserved): *i.e.*, with tax, 11s. 9d., 6s. 9d., 3s. 3d., and 1s. 9d. respectively.

The Psychology of the Gramophone

By A. CLUTTON-BROCK

[There is a peculiar poignancy in this article by the late Mr. Clutton-Brock, because it is probably the last one he wrote; and his generosity in responding like this from a bed of sickness is typical of a rare spirit. I once had the privilege of spending a sunny afternoon with him many years ago, when we walked round and round his beautiful garden and talked mostly about cottage tulips, and perhaps a little about poetry. Alas, I never had the good fortune to discuss with him the gramophone; but the knowledge that a critic for whom I had so great an esteem should have recognised the gramophone went far to help my conviction that this paper was going to be something worth while. A humanist who believed in God, a theologian who did not neglect man, a musician who could enjoy the gramophone, a gardener who knew how to grow flowers, all of these and much more was Clutton-Brock. I like to think that when he was so near death his thoughts turned to that exquisite movement from the Mozart quartet to which he alludes; the inward peace and happiness of the man spoke clearly to us when he said that not even did he want that Schubert Andante on the other side of the record. Mozart hardly lived to finish his own Requiem; but I shall never hear that movement without thinking of it as a perfect requiem for a scholar and a gentleman. R.I.P.]

—ED.]

IN this article I give only my own experience, but I should like to know whether others share it. It may be that they do but have not yet become aware of the fact. If so, I may help them to a more secure enjoyment of the gramophone.

My experience is, then, that I enjoy the gramophone most in company, say with three or four others; but they must be ready, like myself, to enjoy it. If someone present is prejudiced against it I begin to hear it with his prejudice. If I know the weak points of a record beforehand, then it is those weak points that I hear, the places where it seems to go a little flat, or where the instruments lose their character. If there is a sizzle I cannot ignore it; it grows as loud as frying potatoes and I become ashamed of my former enjoyment of the vulgar inadequate thing. Before that one unbeliever I am a coward, fearing him as a person of finer ear than myself, as one who knows more about music and who, being accustomed to the best always, will not put up with my wheezy *pis aller*. I make apologies to him, tell him that my instrument, if one can call it that, has its good and bad days, and this is a bad one; but I know all the while that it is his want of faith which makes it do its worst for me also. It cannot perform miracles except for those who believe in it.

But for them it can, and the stronger the atmosphere of belief, the will to hear its best, the better will it perform. At these happy times I am astonished at its performance and begin to like records which I had almost given up for their faults. But I cannot produce this atmosphere by myself, except at rare moments when something in a record just suits my mood. I have tried to analyze the difference, and it is curious. When I am alone with the gramophone it seems to be performing to me and I am inclined to judge it severely; but when there are two or three friends as eager as myself to enjoy it, the performance seems to be my own; and sometimes I irritate or amuse the others by

waving my hands at a moment of extreme beauty as if I were conducting it, helping it out or even composing the music as it comes. I feel like Bach himself in the Concerto for two violins or Mozart in that movement by the Lener Quartette. (Why are not all the others recorded? I don't want even Schubert on the back of that dance of the angels.) I believe, indeed, that when one comes to know the most celestial music well there is an increase of enjoyment which is like creation itself; the expected phrases seem to be one's own. But it must be the most celestial music; the other, however charming at first, wears out, and instead of identifying yourself with the composer, you are more and more estranged from him as if he told the same story too often. That is ingratitude; it is a great thing to be charming even for a short time and when the charm ceases you haven't found the composer out; you have merely exhausted him, which does not prove that you are his superior.

But that is irrelevant since it applies to all music; I return to the peculiarities of the gramophone. It must be confessed that always with the gramophone we have to make allowances; and these are most easily made when others help us to make them unconsciously. But for that help you need, I think, an intimate atmosphere, three or four friends who, to your knowledge, are eager to enjoy and to extenuate. I have never been one of a large audience listening to the gramophone, but I cannot believe that in such a case I could make the best of it. It would be too like a real concert in its circumstances; and comparisons would force themselves on me.

In a way the gramophone is a *pis aller*, but you can train yourself to forget it in happy surroundings, without blunting your perceptions of the music which is not a *pis aller*. It is not, or need not be, bad art; it is only art obscured by a veil which may grow so thin that you cease to be aware of it. I know good musicians who cannot endure orchestral

music on the gramophone; there the veil for them is too thick. The quality of sound, they say, is disagreeable. They will not or cannot make the necessary allowances; and I must confess that I need the contagion of enthusiasm to make them myself. There are qualities of the orchestra that never survive on the gramophone, the sharpness of attack on the strings, the clearness of their different parts, and the full distinction between strings and wood wind; pizzicato is usually unpleasant, seeming to obtrude between you and the rest of the music; while all the bass parts are apt to be a mere rumble. Sometimes these defects become intolerable and the gramophone is to me no better than a barrel organ. Then I cannot believe that I have ever enjoyed, say, the overture to the *Meistersinger* on it; yet I have and shall again when I have companions to help me. It is not that I am sick of the whole thing but merely that I cannot, then and by myself, make the necessary allowances.

But for the steady, increasing enjoyment of the gramophone one must, I think, be ready to admit its defects. It is no use pretending to yourself or others that it is just as good as a real orchestra heard at a distance. Sooner or later the pretence will break down and you will be left suffering from a reaction against your own delusions. It is, in fact, never as good as an actual performance, unless that performance is itself so bad that any departure from it is for the better. There are pictures that look better in a reproduction, and there is music that sounds better on a gramophone, but it is not music that deserves to be recorded. The secret of enjoying the gramophone is to be honest about it, to confess that there are things it cannot do; and then, some day, it will surprise you by doing them.

Yet there are times, I confess, when I enjoy playing romantic or sentimental tricks with it, when I can persuade myself that by playing some orchestral record with the thinnest possible needle

I have produced a delicate, distant kind of fairy music, something not at all like the actual orchestra but with an original quality of its own. This can best be done with good but imperfect records, such as the Columbia version of *L'Après-midi*, which crackles and is much cut down, yet makes a faint and beautiful concourse of sounds with a very thin needle. Most people, I am sure, play their gramophones too loud and I have been astonished at the indiscriminating use of needles in shops where they try records for you; they will put on the ordinary thick needle for everything, when it is fit for little except fox-trots. Of course, there is a larger public that demands noise and nothing else; and it is this public which maintains the prejudice against the gramophone. Any piece played with too loud a needle has more gramophone-noise than music in it; it is like a woman talking too loud for her voice and has the same forced and discomforting effect.

Finally, I would say, though it is irrelevant to my article, that the best needle I know for strings and delicate orchestral pieces is the thinnest permanent Sonora needle; for it gives you the quality of the strings better than any other. You can use it, if you are careful not to injure the point, about thirty times. I have been told, by the sellers of other needles, that it wears out the records, but I have now used it for some time without any such result. These Sonora needles are sold in three thicknesses. The thickest will give you a clear, ringing quality of sound, but it is apt to shriek; the medium is very good for many orchestral pieces; but try the thin with the *Lener Quartette* records.

I add a still more irrelevant protest against the sacrilege of using a tungstyle needle on the *Lener* Mozart record. You can hear no music, none whatever, through a tungstyle; and if you like noise beat a tin bath!



CINEMA MUSIC

The case of Cinema Music, raised by "Amateur" in our December number (p. 143), has caused a certain amount of interest; for the increasing care with which film-producers aim at inducing in their audiences the correct emotional atmosphere for each scene *through music* clearly involves the selection of trifles or excerpts with an instantaneous appeal; and this appeal is equally instantaneous to the gramophonist. Therefore the best cinema music should all be in the catalogues of records. Mr. Herbert Parsons, who is not only the Recording Secretary of the South London G.S., but is also connected with the Vitagraph Film Company, and in a position to comment on the

subject, has pointed out in a letter that his firm has the advice of Mr. J. B. Hastings, the well-known conductor of the New Oxford Theatre; and Mr. Hastings sees the films in advance, notes down the *type* of music suitable for each scene, and then selects the actual pieces, which are printed in a list distributed with the films. Presumably this is the usual procedure with all film companies. As a particular instance, Mr. Parsons takes "The Truth about Wives," a Betty Blythe production, and points out that ten pieces from the musical programme are already obtainable on records—that is to say, about a third. It appears that musical directors of recording companies might with advantage keep in touch with these musical programmes of films.

MUSIC AND THE MINORITY

By R. A. SAUNDERS

Our readers will notice that the following article is already somewhat out of date in details, a fact which emphasizes the rapid improvement of the last few months, and encourages the hope that Mr. Saunders was unduly pessimistic when he wrote it. We believe that the tide has definitely turned.

NONE of the would-be members of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's proposed society need much reminder of the abominable conditions which the gramophone companies impose on any of the peculiar individuals whose knowledge of music is not limited to the few contemptible and unoriginal fripperies which assail one at all hours from the barrel organs, the café orchestras, the street bands (unique combinations of the flute, euphonium, cornet, and collecting box), and the river gramophones.

It is impossible even to glance through record catalogues without becoming cynical at the expense of the company which boasts that each of its records is a work of art and entirely unaffected by competition. After all, what sound business man would dream of beginning a competition with, as its object, the finest reproduction of a Bach fugue? But the H.M.V. Co. does not state that each of its records is a reproduction of a work of art, and still less would it be inclined to state that every work of art was obtainable via the gramophone. Over the piano and the pianola the gramophone has the obvious advantage that it enables the listener, without any exertion or any preliminary training, to familiarise himself with renderings by the finest artists of the world's greatest music; and the obvious disadvantage that at present it restricts the listener to such a paltry handful of classics that sooner or later he is driven to the despair policy of tinkling piano arrangements. The amount of good music obtainable on gramophone records is almost negligible when compared with the enormous rubbish heap of ballads, and jazz, and early Verdi, and foxtrots, which makes the serious person ask himself on every visit to a gramophone saloon whether the gramophone is a blessing or a curse—whether it does bring music into the home or whether it brings only bad music there. A list of good music of which there are no available records would be a list of at least 75 per cent.* of the world's good music.

In the H.M.V. catalogue, which is by far the biggest, Bach, possibly the world's most prolific composer, is represented by four fugues (he wrote hundreds), one concerto, one song, a few movements from dance suites, no orchestral music save one Brandenburg concerto, no choral music, no organ

music. Beethoven can be discovered in one and a quarter symphonies, a massacred version of the *Egmont Overture*, *Leonora No. 3*, the *Moonlight Sonata*, recorded twice, the *Kreutzer Sonata*, and a few odds and ends, songs, movements from quartets, and violin solos. Brahms, Debussy, Handel, Haydn, Purcell, Schumann, and Schubert are very poorly represented. Mozart comes off a little better, though his keyboard music has not been recorded. Wagner's best works, the *Mastersingers* and *Tristan*, are hardly recorded at all, and the few records of *Parsifal* are miserable specimens. Very old music, very modern music, organ and choral music have not been recorded at all. The name of Hugo Wolf appears in no record catalogue.

Some of the trouble arises from the ridiculous habit of celebrity worship, which is carried to the limit by the Columbia Co. whose catalogue does not provide for the contingency of anyone's wishing to buy a record for the music contained thereon, not only for the performer's sake. (*En passant*, why was Elwes not a celebrity, why has Harold Samuel recorded nothing, and why can a string quartet be a "celebrity" while that honour is withheld from a conductor or an orchestra?) Kreisler is a great violinist who stoops to devote half his recitals to the brilliant performance of sugary and banal tit-bits. The H.M.V. Co. gives us the tit-bits but not the *Elgar Concerto* or the *Kreutzer Sonata*. Again, the talent of six first-rate artists has recently been wasted on a sextet from *Lucia*. When are we to have the *Quintet* from the *Mastersingers* equally well rendered? Celebrity worship is ridiculous because of its concentration on technique and its absolute disregard of subject-matter; and its sudden death might well be taken up as part of the proposed society's work.

The third job for the proposed society is so apparent that a visitor innocent of our civilisation would be in danger of losing his reason on understanding how difficult it would be to carry out. The visitor would see at least five hundred sensitive and intelligent beings banded together to demand that the reluctant gramophone companies produce at least one complete symphony, two complete chamber works, and one complete concerto per year. He would realise that three companies between them have control of the world's talent and are

* I should think 35 per cent. nearer the mark.—Ed.

thus apparently in a position to satisfy the demands of the five hundred sensitive and intelligent beings. But on closer investigation he would see that not one of the three big companies could possibly give a reproduction even of one complete symphony. The best that could be obtained would contain not only the breaks between the movements as prescribed by the composer, but also inevitably one break regularly every four or five minutes. And the visitor, whose nerves would be upset by the periodical rest occupied by turning over the record, changing the needle, and re-winding the machine, would enquire whether any invention eliminating these rests had been made; and it would be on hearing the calm answer—"Yes"—that he would be in danger of losing his reason. "Why, O why," he would exclaim, "Can you five hundred sensitive and intelligent men not effect a union between the small company which has the brilliant invention but no talent at its disposal, and the large company which, with its command over so many much-boasted celebrities, could utilise to the full the brilliant invention?"

By systematic cajoling and bribing, the members of the proposed society might, after endless trouble obtain at any rate some of the music they desired. But would they be happy when they got it? Would the new state of affairs be any more comfortable or less ludicrous than the present? The majority, undeveloped through no fault of their own, would still demand rubbish. The gramophone companies would continue to make the supply so easy that, as now, no swan on the River Thames would ever be out of earshot of a foxtrot. To their children the members of the new society would be able to say, "If you are normal—that is incredibly sentimental and unintelligent where music is concerned—your tastes will be encouraged and satisfied. If by a miracle, you escape the baleful influence of every note of the bad music you will have forced on you at every turn, and learn to apply your common-sense to music as to other things, then for your reward, if you can band yourself with at least four hundred and ninety-nine other beings in order to enrich the ordinary shareholders of the gramophone companies, then you will be able to satisfy one smallest part of your desire."

Who is to blame? Why, in order to bring about a recording of a great work of art which has already enjoyed popularity for a century or so, do I have to join a Trade Union and adopt towards those who should be assisting me that violently bellicose attitude of mind which is so characteristic of modern competitive industrialism? At the beginning of this article I have blamed the gramophone companies, inasmuch as though they have the power and the machinery to produce the good works for which the would-be members of the proposed society

are so impatient, they employ it in turning out such rubbish.

But it is conceivable that the directors of the company might turn round and reply quite accurately, that they must have money in order to live, and that they find that the community grants them the wherewithal to live abundantly, more so when they supply the community with *Yes! we have no bananas* than when they reproduce Bach's *Mass in B minor*. The workers in the gramophone companies, feeling themselves involved, might retort, also quite accurately, "We only work for our living. We only perform a tiresome mechanical job at the machine all day, for this is all we are paid or allowed to do. We receive an unintelligible piece of vulcanite from some of our fellows and put it into our machines and pass it on, still in an unfinished state. We do not know what is on it. We do not see the finished product and cannot hold ourselves responsible for it, however much we might like to serve the community." And the members of the community in their turn might reply, still quite accurately, "Whatever desires we had for the appreciation of music were given no encouragement when we were at school. Now we all of us perform such dull jobs all day that in the evenings we want relaxation, not education." And when the enquirer perceives the vicious circle he comes to the fatalistic conclusion that no one is to blame—that everyone concerned is acting in the only possible way, with, unfortunately, the worst possible results.

However, in the sense that you can get things altered, you, gentle reader, are at fault, for you can realise the bad system that corrupts every member of it. You are intelligent and sensitive and can image a better state of things and can read and understand how it can be brought about; a state of things in which efficient company directors do not have to pander to bad tastes in order to live; in which supplies of commodities do not reach the public only after a miserable money grubbing competition between firms which should be co-operating; in which the workers, properly grouped in Guilds as in the Middle Ages and not in Trade Unions, have some pride in their work; in which a liberal public education is carried out with money now spent in equipping Singapore against Japan (the hideous irony of Nature's forestalment!); and in which only necessary work is done.

And if the gentle reader also has his retort, and, taken aback, exclaims "But this is not music—this is politics; it is worse—it is Bolshevism!" my retort is still to come and it is this—that the change we all desire is essentially a matter of politics, and as the politicians, of their own free will, take no interest in music, then the musicians must make haste and take an interest in politics.

A Sentimental Gramophonage

By JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN

MY first introduction to the gramophone was when I was ten years old—in 1901, to be exact; the place Kimberley, South Africa; the setting, the long, wide hall of our bungalow, three miles from town, adjacent to one of the outlying diamond mines of which my dad was general manager.

He had bought it at Port Elizabeth, where he had been on business, and the nature of the novelty was kept a profound secret, so as to enhance the joy of a means of amusement where amusement was none too plentiful. For there were no cinemas in those days, and the Kimberley theatre opened very infrequently, and then with shows that were not exactly latest "West End" productions. A day or so after the gramophone's triumphant inception our Zulu kitchen boy came to my mother, and in an awed whisper asked:

"Missis, where does Baas keep she?"

He had heard Edna May singing *The Purity Brigade* from *The Belle of New York*, and ascribed supernatural properties to the little brown box with the brass trumpet. This little machine was far too trivial and feeble in its results for a man of my dad's scientific and highly cultured turn of mind; and so it gave place to a succession of weird monsters from America and England, the most interesting of which, I remember, had a glass trumpet, the same shape as the original horn into which the pictorial Nipper gazes. It was not a success. My dad finally settled on a large and powerful machine (for those days), and immediately effected a revolution in amplifiers by using various sized horns of very thick drawing paper and linen-backed strawboard, with which he achieved results of remarkable beauty and sonority. What his soundbox experiments were I am unable to say, but I know he gave a good deal of attention to the "soul of the gramophone." He formed a collection of about 300 discs of various makes and amazing variety, containing many celebrities of those far-off days. I remember him giving concerts with this machine in the mine compound to about 500 Kaffir labourers, and the fear and excitement and hubbub which arose when the gramophone talked! An interpreter translated "*His Master's Voice*."

In 1904 we had an H.M.V. Monarch, with tone-arm, Exhibition soundbox, and oak horn (incidentally the H.M.V. people have never turned out anything much better tonally) and a magnificent collection of celebrity records, the stars of which were Melba and Caruso, amidst a galaxy of British, American, and Continental

talent—much of which, unhappily is no longer available. All this, however, did not satisfy me. I was egotistical enough to desire a machine of my own, and at the early age of 10½ I made my first gramophone out of bits of wood, two cotton reels, a pillbox for the soundbox, and a paper trumpet, the motive power being supplied by hand. My dad used to present me gravely with all the broken and cracked records, and my very first disc was *The Death of Nelson*, in about eighteen pieces, which I laboriously stuck together with seccotine and backed with cardboard. My joy at the fearsome sounds and clatterings this contraption gave forth was only equalled by the intense amusement of my dad at the ghoulish eagerness with which I longed for him to drop records so that I might hug their damaged fragments to my childish breast.

In 1905 my dad died, and my mother and I came home to England. For the next few years my gramophonizing was intermittent and was conducted on machines I manufactured and on those little harp-shaped phonographs the Germans used to flood us with at anything from 2s. 11d. upwards. By using a large reproducer with a rubber patch fixed by seccotine between the mica and the sapphire "spider" I secured some quite decent tonal results. One of these machines accompanied me to South Africa in 1907, where it remained when we came home again finally. It was decidedly popular on the voyage out, as I had about twenty good cylinders, the whole outfit going into a tin hatbox! In 1915 I bought my first gramophone, a very good secondhand Paillard Echophone.

This was a great event. I solemnly marched home carrying the trumpet and soundbox followed by a beery individual bearing the remainder of the machine and some records. On this beloved instrument I started gramophonizing in earnest. I piled up a large collection of cheap records, and blossomed forth with a few celebrities. I carried out innumerable experiments. I took it to pieces and put it together again, experiencing a joy therein which is known only to the true enthusiast and is not the property of those poor souls who only regard the gramophone as a means to an end and do not love it for itself.

Shortly afterwards I enlisted, and while in the army met several notable gramophones. There was a well-worn machine at the West Street "Hut" in Durban, which I longed to rejuvenate but could not, owing to lack of tools and time; there was the heavenly machine of the 6th Mountain Battery at Peshawar, which had been all over the North-West

Frontier; there were the two German hornless bacon-boxes of the Campbellpur and Peshawar Hospitals, which gave me many delightful hours; there was the Peshawar Soldier's Home instrument from which I had to be dragged away at closing time, and there was the Deolali Y.M.C.A. H.M.V. which entertained me for three weeks in that otherwise ghastly place. And last, but not least, there was the portable in an ammunition box which a sergeant-major brought home from Mesopotamia.

After demobilisation I stuck to the Echophone for a year and then bought an internal-horn table model on which I learned to get decent results from phonocut discs. By this time I was taking in the *Talking Machine News* and *The Sound Wave*, in which I revelled. It was through reading the society reports in the first-named that I became a member of the South London Society. Towards the end of 1920 I was requested to undertake the reporting and in 1921 was made first Honorary Recording Secretary of that Society, a position I held until March, 1923, when business exigencies compelled me to resign from the Society movement, much to my regret. Anyone who has been a "Recording Angel" will agree with me, I am sure, when I say that it is a fascinating and thankless task, involving a lot of thought and a considerable amount of tact, if one really endeavours to do one's best, be fair, and avoid treading on corns. I have no doubt that I must have been a severe trial at times, owing to my failure to uphold the pet fetishes of the Exhibition Soundbox as the Only Possible Reproducer and the glories (?) of fibre needles. Also my tendency to Pathés must be alarming until one gets used to it. But I owe a good deal to the Society movement.

In April, 1921, I got rid of my table hornless and invested in a table model Grafonola. I value this excellent instrument very highly, for it has been a well-loved and faithful friend in a time of great sorrow and loneliness in my life following the

death of my beloved mother. After 2½ years' vicissitudes in lodgings it now reigns supreme in a home of its own and has found a new devotee in my wife. When all else failed me music held firm, and has, in consequence, taken a place in my life it never held before. My childish knowledge of piano-playing and music-reading has long since faded; but the love of good music is ever growing, and my taste in records becomes ever more critical. I have had hundreds of records in the last few years and am continually eliminating those that I tire of or which do not reach standards which I consider satisfactory. I much prefer orchestral music to any other form, and I hope gradually to educate myself up to chamber music, which I do not as yet fully appreciate.

In conclusion, I have not gone so far upon my twenty-two years gramophonage without forming definite opinions. To me a gramophone and a number of good records are as essential as bread and butter. Amongst the many good instruments of leading makers I have heard I prefer the Columbia Grafonola. I have a great opinion of the Duophone, the Cliftophone, and the Kestraphone. The best soundbox I have heard is the large Astra with either compo diaphragm or Murdoch bevelled mica. Unfortunately, the amplifier of my machine is too small to give a satisfactory result of this really splendid reproducer. I do not like small soundboxes of the "Exhibition" type; while brilliant, they lack "body" and to my ear sound shrill and distorted. The best needles I consider to be Petmecky and Cliftophone Arrow, the latter for medium or soft tone. The only advantage I see in fibre is that it does not wear records; tonally it strikes me as unnatural and dull, except in rare instances such as Mr. Norman Hillyer provides at Society meetings. Finally, I would say to all who regard the gramophone simply as a musical instrument that it is equally absorbing scientifically, and should be studied from that angle as well.



NOTES

Several enquiries have reached us from readers who wish, for one reason or another, to have their voices recorded. The Cliftophone people (The Chappell Piano Co., Ltd., 50, New Bond Street, W. 1) are willing to make all the necessary arrangements; but it is still an expensive business, about 7 guineas for a 10in. record and six copies.

* * *

In our last issue, p. 148, the Editor referred to records by Walter Glynn and Sydney Coltham. The price should have been stated to be 3s. each, not 3s. 6d. We are obliged to Messrs. Wilson Peck, Ltd., of Sheffield, for this correction.

One of the new "Hines" Gramophones spent a night at the office and went through some mild tests after hours. It was a £25 10s. table model, a beautiful piece of cabinet work, and had more—and more sensible—gadgets than any other machine that we know. The self-stopping apparatus is especially neat and quiet. In tone rather like the new Grafonola, with a sound-box similar to H.M.V. No. 2. It ranks, and claims to rank, with the best machines on the market, and though we were not shaken in our loyalty to the office Orchestraphone, we expect to hear from some of our Glasgow readers that the "Hines" has stood the test of experience brilliantly.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM

We give prominence to the following letter because it is a well-directed attack upon a contributor who is well able to defend himself, and also because it enables us indirectly to show our appreciation of a distinguished contemporary :

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—In your notice (p. 101) of Captain Barnett's "Up-to-date Gramophone Tips" you mention the provocative character of some of his statements. The two articles on needles and sound-boxes, by the same writer, which have recently appeared in this journal, suggest the awful thought that THE GRAMOPHONE subscribers are to be regaled with the "Tips" in monthly instalments. Lest, therefore, any newly-fledged gramophile should regard them as inspired writings, I crave the hospitality of your correspondence columns to refute some of the captain's more sweeping assertions. "You cannot get a round tone out of a square horn" is a motto to be found in the "Tips"; but when their author sets out to become a tutor to the gramophone public he goes far towards solving the analogous problem of fitting a square peg into a round hole.

In the first place, he not only denies the pleasure of first-class musical tone to those whose machines contain goose-neck tone-arms, rectangular horns, or horns constructed of sheet metal, but characterises the tone in all such cases as "horrid" (p. 128). In the "Tips" he even calls the dead-end goose-neck an abomination which should be abolished. Well, it has been a standard fitting to all H.M.V. gramophones for many years, and it is difficult to believe that the Gramophone Company is directed by fools. Mr. H. Wild, a musician well-known for his excellent contributions to *The Sound Wave*, says (*Sound Wave*, 1920, p. 252): "I greatly prefer the horn type and the goose-neck tone-arm." There may be theoretical reasons why the straight Continental type should be superior; yet Mr. H. Gaydon, the designer of the modern "Stentorphone" and a prolific experimenter, admits that in practice a well-made arm of one type is as satisfactory as one of the other (*Sound Wave*, 1923, p. 508), and Mr. Henry Seymour regards the goose-neck as a valuable tonal analyser. In my own comparative tests, carried out with arms of the same length, and using the same external horns and sound-boxes, I have found that the goose-neck arm has no difficulty in holding its own, while it has the great advantage of permitting a heavy sound-box to be used without resorting to counter-balancing devices to avoid undue pressure on the record.

As regards the rectangular horn, by which the gallant captain doubtless refers to the type of internal horn fitted to H.M.V., Vocalion and other machines, this horn commences with a circular

section, which, after proceeding for some distance, is gradually transformed in shape, so that it terminates in a rectangular cone. It is generally conceded that the circular section throughout is to be preferred. To what extent, then, does the preceding type lag behind? My own experience has been derived from a comparison of an H.M.V. large external horn model and one of their largest cabinet machines, both being in the same sitting-room, and two years of comparison still leaves me undecided as to which has the better all-round tone. Hence I conclude that in practice the rectangular type of horn need not be noticeably inferior to one of circular section throughout. Here I am afraid that I fall foul of Mr. Seymour (*Sound Wave*, 1921, p. 296), but at the same time I do not think my conclusion is really very much at variance with that expressed by Mr. Gaydon (*Ibid.*, 1923, p. 510). Unfortunately, in cheap machines this type of horn can be, and not infrequently is, atrociously designed and constructed.

To come now to the sheet metal horn. It is undoubtedly a fact that there are metal horns and metal horns, but the indiscriminate condemnation of sheet metal for horn construction is simply stupid. For all-round results on an open-horn machine I think the H.M.V. metal horn is difficult to better, provided any looseness in the seams is attended to; but, unless fibre needles are used, a wooden or similar horn is preferable for the reproduction of string tone. I have arrived at this conclusion somewhat reluctantly after having indulged in an expensive wooden horn, but I know I am not in the wilderness even among my own circle of musical friends; while Mr. Seymour remarks (*Sound Wave*, 1920, p. 338) that "there is quite a bias in favour of all-wood amplifiers . . . but the truth is that a metal amplifier is the best, if properly made." Some expensive cabinet machines have the internal horns constructed largely of sheet metal; the Vocalion instruments are a case in point. Yet you, Mr. Editor, are inconsiderate enough to state (p. 122) that you have never heard the glorious voice of Mme. Galli-Curci to better advantage than on your Vocalion model. Shame upon you, Sir, for mixing two complementary poisons in order to reproduce such a lovely voice!

Turning next to the Captain's remarks on sound-boxes, there is an air of finality and a delightful pseudo-scientific touch about the following (p. 128): "Undoubtedly the first thing to be considered is the size and shape of the horn you have to throw into

resonance. This will determine approximately the size of the sound-boxes between which your choice must lie. It is not possible to make a big horn speak correctly with the dynamic energy that can be put into it by a small box; and if you have a machine with a small horn it is a waste of money to buy a big box." I have quoted Captain Barnett's words at length, and have no hesitation in saying that the statements expressed therein are sheer, unadulterated nonsense. The function of the sound-box is *not* to throw the horn (or its contained air) into resonance, and it is so far from being necessary to employ a large horn with a large sound-box that, *given a sufficiently large and sensitive diaphragm the horn can be entirely eliminated*; as witness the Pathé "Actuelle" machine and an apparently similar machine which the Gramophone Company has placed on the French market. Mr. Gaydon remarks (*Sound Wave*, 1923, p. 694) that "there is a decided relationship between the sound-box and the amplifying system, for instance, a small horn will give better results with a large diaphragm and a large horn with a small diaphragm." Mr. H. Wild, in advocating the large H.M.V. horn machine, writes as follows with regard to the choice of sound-boxes (*Sound Wave*, 1920, p. 252): "For absolutely critical definition there is not a box on the market to compare with the H.M.V. Exhibition . . . whatever there is in a record it will bring out;" but "until all records are technically perfect, some will always want a little humouring to get the most pleasant results out of them, so I use, in addition to the Exhibition box, one of large diameter . . . (an Astra) . . . But I find that it is the Exhibition box that does nearly all the work, and the Astra is only called in as a specialist on occasions." Lastly, those who are acquainted with Mr. Seymour's boxes will know that he recommends the smaller type with an open-horn machine, and advocates the large Superphone for use on cabinets.

Since I have no doubt that Captain Barnett is sincerely desirous of assisting his fellow-gramophonists, the question very naturally arises as to how two enthusiasts such as he and I, each probably representative of a goodly band of like enthusiasts, can hold such diverse opinions. The answer can be traced, I think, to the fact that the reproduction of music by the gramophone is imperfect. Each combination of box, arm and horn, &c., falls from grace in its own peculiar way, and since one man's meat is another man's poison, some will prefer one kind of imperfection while others will swear by a different brand. A type of imperfection detested by earnest music lovers is the "metallic" twang. It is in an endeavour to avoid this, I think, that so many fly to the large sound-box, or replace the mica diaphragm by paper or fibrous compositions and the like; and, having in this way "eliminated

metallic tone," are only too apt to think that the mellow tone they have achieved is a "natural" one. I have been through it all myself; at one time or another I have been the temporary victim of the large box, the medium box, and the ivory, flex and recordia diaphragms; and I have come back to my first love, the Exhibition-size sound-box with mica diaphragm, used in conjunction with a large horn. It is unfortunately true that the elimination of all traces of "metallic" tone from these small boxes is a very difficult matter, but it can be done; and to those who are of my way of thinking the musical reproductions then obtained are, in general, far more faithful "portrayals" of the originals than the "impressionist" results obtained with larger boxes and with alternative diaphragms.

Yours truly,

H. F. V. LITTLE.

Postscript, January.—I should like to point out to Mr. Rice (vide p. 167) that the Exhibition box can be re-adjusted in a variety of ways without altering its appearance, since the following points of detail are all capable of independent variation: (i.) thickness and flexibility of the mica; (ii.) resiliency of the rubber gaskets, their bores and external diameters; (iii.) the quality of steel used for, and the tempering of, the cross-tension springs; (iv.) choice of metals for needle socket and upper arm of stylus bar, the precise shape and thickness of the latter and its freedom or otherwise from paint or enamel. There is a remark attributed to Michael Angelo to the effect that trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle; it is by careful attention to the foregoing trifles that the tone of the Exhibition box is to be perfected. I mentioned its ability to reproduce the bass because it is so often condemned by its critics in this respect, and I am surprised at my own moderation in claiming for it no more than equality with the large boxes, since it gives a better reproduction of the timbre of the bass, which in bands and orchestras receives its due consideration without being unduly emphasized. My objection to the B.R.O.S. box is that its timbre is all wrong, so that its sweet and mellow tone leaves me cold; the box I tested, a perfectly new one, was lent to me by a friend, and tried with steel and fibre needles on two machines, a table model and a large horn gramophone. My friend was more charitable than I in his verdict.

I never suggested that the evil effects of springy needles are confined to soprano records, but that the effects are quickly noticeable in such cases. I dearly bought my experience in this connection, and a goose-neck tone-arm did not enter into the question. I agree with Captain Barnett that if a flat is readily worn on a needle it is destructive to the record track; we part company when he claims to *eliminate* wear on the record by using an extra

hard steel needle. I think most people will admit *a priori* that the ability of the needle to wear the track is increased. I acknowledge the powerful aid which Captain Barnett enlists in his defence of the 45° angle of slope. Yet, notwithstanding the beneficial effect of the gentler slope on the surface noise, which most novices are quick to discover, the steeper angle is still adhered to by the Gramo-

phone Company, the Columbia Grafanola Company, and the Aeolian Company, and is recommended by Mr. Harry Gaydon. Captain Barnett admits the steeper slope for fibre needles; I regard it as equally desirable with the customary type of loud needle point.

H.F.V.L.

Ilford.



Some Piano Records

VLADIMIR CERNIKOV.

[*M. Cernikov's playing is probably familiar to most of our readers, and we were naturally eager that he should give us his candid opinion on the piano records made by his fellow-artists. Though it is to be regretted that he found the English language, when he started writing, rather less inspiring and tractable than a key-board, we are very grateful for what is a really expert opinion on this thorny subject. In conversation M. Cernikov expressed unbounded admiration for the Moiseiwitch records above all others; but he had not heard the Harold Samuel records when he put laborious pen to paper.—Ed.*]

THERE is no denying the fact that at last piano records have come into their own, and this is all the more satisfactory seeing that it is the result of very strenuous efforts made by all the leading firms to improve their recordings. The awful tin-kettle little productions have entirely disappeared. While listening the other day to a number of records, I couldn't help thinking of the very great educational value they will be in the future. But I am firmly convinced that there will be only a market for good music. The twin-sister to the dreadful ballad, so-called popular, will not be sought after by the lover of piano music. It is therefore to be regretted that the excellent recording of the Edison Company contains so many pieces of second-class drawing-room music which nobody wants to hear. I except, of course, the record of Rachmaninoff's *Prelude* (Edison 82187): as pianist and composer he is a very fine recording artist. His *A flat Valse* of Chopin (82197) is a model of classical elegance. Very elegant and refined too is Marie Novello's rendering of *Liebestraume* of Liszt (Winner 3443). Debussy's *Jardin sous la pluie*, by Murdoch (Col. D. 1465 ds. 5s.), is another excellent record for delicacy and tone colour, and I was particularly delighted to hear the very spirited rendering of Saint Saën's *G Minor Concerto*, by Max Darewski (Zono. A.279, 10in., ds., 2s. 6d.), whom we hear unfortunately so seldom in concert halls.

It is altogether a very pleasant duty to have to report on such high-class playing as that in almost all the latest records. Irene Scharrer's *Prelude and Fugue in C Sharp* of Bach (H.M.V. D.567) is a splendid example of how Bach should be played,

the fugue especially is a model of clear exposition and rhythmic motion.

Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata*, by Lamond (H.M.V. D.773, D.774, 13s.), is invaluable for students as a classical rendering combined with virtuoso fire. Cortot in the *Rondo* of Mendelssohn (H.M.V. 05733, 7s. 6d.) shows all the grace, vivacity and elegance of his playing, and I was very much interested to find that a certain passage which causes a good deal of trouble to many pianists does not seem quite immune from danger for him. *Danse des Gnomes*, played by Pouishnoff (Col. D.1454, 5s.), is an admirable example of highly finished virtuosity, but nothing in that respect can equal *Motum Perpetuum*, by Moiseiwitch (H.M.V. D.735, 6s. 6d.), the astounding beauty of tone and the humour are beyond praise. Paderewski's rendering of a Chopin study (H.M.V. 5706, 5s. 6d.) is naturally on a very high level, but I doubt if any record could reproduce the extraordinary magnetic influence of the Polish master. There are many more records I could mention, but space is limited. I would like every music student to get the masterly record of de Falla's *Fantasia Baetica*, played by Mark Hambourg (H.M.V. D.766, ds., 6s. 6d.). This piece, which is so difficult that only a few can approach it, is one of the most beautiful things written in latter years. Hambourg has realised in an amazing way its rhythmical impetus, its fierce character as well as its lyric charm. Nothing to my mind demonstrates more clearly the supreme importance of the compositions of the brilliant Spaniard, whose work is surely immortal.



THE NEW-POOR PAGE

By H. T. B.

Half-Crown and Two-Shilling
records good on both sides



HOW few records show drum tone in its proper proportion. A notable exception is the (Regal) band and side-drum record *The Mascot of the Troop*. This proves to the hilt the unwisdom of record makers in neglecting the drums as they do. On a few small machines perhaps the drum may seem to be a soap-box hit with a ham-bone, but that is not the fault of the record. A march showing a little drum is *The Gallant Seventh* (Guardsman). Here is a waltz record showing a little drum on both sides, *My Queen* and *Dolores* (Beltona). Readers please tell me of any other good half-crown or two-shilling records with a clear drum part. Also, is there a good ten-inch record of *Up-to-date*? Marek Weber has made it so precious yea, even scrumptious, on a twelve-inch Parlo. disc that I want to find a good ten-inch record of it.

The broadcasting of the Savoy Havana Band has made "Darkie" music very popular. I like *The Sunny South* numbers on Beltona records very much. Here are three beautiful ones showing great versatility: TANGO: *Sweet Carmen*. WALTZ: *Heather Bells*. FOX-TROT: *Sittin' in a Corner*.

A reader, Mr. J. Lock, favourably mentions the (Aco.) SELECTION *Barber of Seville*, and the (Zono.) INTERMEZZO *Fragrance*, and *The Miniature*. Mr. H. Gordon Tidey favourably mentions BRASS BAND MARCH: *The Pitman* (Regal) and he says Speed 74.

By the by, be very careful you are not caught with out-of-centre records of various prices. After my warning a year ago this fault ceased for a time, but it is now cropping up again in several makes and rather badly.

Now my own selection:—PIPE ORGAN: *Tannhauser* (Regal). O, that some great firm would record Widor's and Saint Saen's grand organ masterpieces! GRAND PIANO: *Marche Militaire* (Winner). A vigorous record. *Pas des Amphores* (Winner). A delicate record. On needle tests I have played *Pas des Amphores* records over 300 times, and yet I am not tired of the piece or of the way Marie Novello plays it. PIANOFORTE: *Fantasia Impromptu* (Homo.). Brilliant: PIANO FOX-TROTS:—*The Cat's Pyjamas* (Parlo.). *Coaxing the Piano* (Guardsman). *Greenwich Witch* (Homo.). All are brilliant in tone. HARP: *The Spinning Wheel* (Zono.). Only suitable for large machines. Not so good as those previously mentioned. VIOLIN

AND MUSTEL ORGAN: *Dorothy's Lullaby* (Zono.). The continuous tone of the mustel organ covers surface noise fairly well. PIANO DUETS: *A Bunch of Keys*, *Remember the Rose* (Regal), *La Lisonjera* (Scala). The music lying chiefly in the treble, these are very (and only) suitable for small machines, or for machines with small sound-boxes. VIOLIN AND PIANO: *Viennese Waltz Song* (Regal). *Little Song* (Imperial). Each side of the latter a gem. I like this better than any cheap violin record I have heard for a year. Speed 74. VIOLIN, FLUTE AND PIANO: *Berceuse* (Jocelyn) (Parlo.). Rich, full tone. 'CELLO: *Caro Mio Ben* (Parlo.). SMALL ORCHESTRA: *No. 2, Gipsy Suite* (German) (Beltona). *Treasure Island* (Beltona). *On a Moonlight Night* (Parlo.). *Sullivan Memories* (Parlo.). SOPRANO: *Lo! Here the Gentle Lark* (Hudson) (Zono.). CONTRALTO: Any of Miss Edith Furse's Series (Aco.). TENOR: *Ninetta* (Zono.). A delicate song, delicately sung. BARITONE: *The Drum Major* (Zono.). MILITARY BAND: *Naila*. Ballet music. (Imperial.) SAXOPHONE: *Waltz Llewellyn* (Beltona). POPULAR SONGS: *Leave me with a Smile* (Parlo.). FOX-TROTS: Owners of small machines who need records of great tone and clarity for dancing to should not miss *First, Last and Always* (Imperial). HAWAIIAN: *Honolulu Rag*. I dislike most Hawaiian music, but this is an entire departure in style, bright and cheerful. CONCERTINA, with piano and cymbals: *Dance of the Skeletons* (Winner). Concertina records come out well even on the smallest machines. NONSENSE SONGS: If the children compel you to buy vocal fox-trots you will find Stanley Kirkby's pleasant baritone voice in *Felix kept on Walking* (Winner), and Fred Granger's clear tenor and perfect enunciation in *Sing along Sambo* (Winner). HUMOROUS INSTRUMENTAL TRIO: *The Policeman's Birthday* (Regal). Young people, with whom I am always in sympathy, love all these "Trio Nuovo" numbers. Their tone is so full that they come out well even on the smallest machines.

N.B.—I have purposely refrained from giving catalogue information because I wish readers to get the lists containing any numbers they fancy from their dealers, and then if they do not like the pair on the record I have mentioned they may be tempted to try another record of the same series.

Everyone should remember that machines having small horns (resonators) will not respond fully to the tone of instruments having large resonators or large resonating columns of air.

Analytical Notes and First Reviews

[The quantity of important records which require analytical notes has crowded out the translations of operatic airs this month, but they will be continued next month. It should be pointed out to new readers that all the records reviewed here will be submitted to the Editor for his Quarterly Review in the April number. Acknowledgments are due to Messrs. Goodwin and Tabb, 34, Percy Street, W. 1, and to Chester's Library, Great Marlborough Street, W. 1, for the loan of scores.]

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.782, 783 (12in. d.s., 6s. 6d. each).—**Harold Samuel** (piano): **Chromatic Fantasia**, Parts I. and II. (Bach). D.783.—**Fugue from Fantasia and Two Bourrees in A minor** (Bach).

Chromatic Fantasia.—A really authoritative interpretation of this work is most welcome; as played by Harold Samuel it becomes not a meaningless succession of arpeggios and trills but a beautiful rhapsody highly charged with emotion. Its chromatic character gives it a passionate glow denied to mere diatonics, but the impression probably left with the listener will be one of meditative sadness and a consciousness of having been in very close touch with Bach's inmost self. The Chromatic Fantasia was originally written for the clavichord, a little precursor of the piano whose tone is so small that it can barely be heard at the other end of the room, yet possessing an intimacy the piano entirely lacks, and for this reason much loved by Bach. (Bach, we are told, disliked the pianoforte he heard when he stayed with Frederick the Great.)

Part I.—The work at the outset throws out two defiant phrases; long chromatic sweeps all over the keyboard follow with nothing in the way of an extended melody; then a short pause and the music forges on again calming down to a beautiful section consisting of chords passing through many tonalities and played arpeggio-wise. This ends the first part.

Part II.—The music becomes deeply meditative and after some cadenza-like passages marked "presto" we reach a majestic cadence, what follows being in the nature of a very lovely and tender coda. Everyone will want this record; the piano tone is splendid and the recording as clear as can be.

The Fugue.—A fugue is a kind of musical argument in which one voice announces the subject of the argument and goes on to develop this while the next voice (above or below as the case may be) also announces the subject and subsequent development, and so on, according to the number of voices used, usually three or four; this is called the exposition. Then the composer is free to toss his subject and counter-subject (so the development of the first is called) from voice to voice and to work up his material to a climax, when, after many ingenuities, the subject appears at close quarters in all the voices and the fugue is brought to a triumphant conclusion. There is no more beautiful and satisfying form in all music than the fugue; it is a form peculiar to the musical art, for in speech a multiplication of voices means a din, but in music one voice reinforces the beauty of the other.

Take careful note of Bach's chromatic "subject" and at a first hearing listen for this to the exclusion of everything else: this is a three-voiced fugue. At subsequent hearings you can make yourself acquainted with other architectural details until the building appears whole and in all its magnificence. A score of the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue may be cheaply purchased from any good music seller.

Two Bourrees in A minor.—The bourrée is a quick dance of French origin frequently found in Bach's and older time suites. The record may be found puzzling but the following dry-looking formula will make it clear:—

First Bourrée. Second Bourrée. First Bourrée.

A:—B: A:—B: A—B

The two bourrées are in the form of a minuet and trio; repeats are indicated by ": ". Notice Bach's walking bass. The recording is excellent, really good piano tone, and it is sufficient to say the pianist is Harold Samuel. Here, at any rate, is an artist of continental stature.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.791, 792, 793 and 794 (12in., d.s., 6s. 6d. each).—**Catterall Quartet**: **Quartet in C minor, Op. 51** (Brahms).

At last, and for the first time in the history of the gramophone, we are given a complete recording of a quartet; heartiest congratulations to the H.M.V. Company, who, we trust, will never fall from

grace in this matter, and that other companies will also "too the line." It is to be hoped that the gramophone public will respond to this overture and show the manufacturers that they will back up their enterprise; this alone will make complete recordings possible.

This Brahms quartet would not be everybody's choice for such a momentous occasion but it is, nevertheless, a beautiful work eminently worth possessing.

Enjoyment of it will be greatly enhanced if the miniature score of the music is purchased: the collaboration of ear and eye will reveal many unsuspected beauties; indeed, a score is a necessity in listening to music of such fine workmanship.

Part I. Allegro.—The first tune (on the first violin) should be impressed by repetition on the memory; its rhythmic nature renders this easy and it should be noted that this is one of those tunes peculiarly liable to inversion, i.e., the composer will sometimes make it leap down instead of up while preserving the same rhythmic sequence of notes. A long drawn note on the viola brings us to the second tune, also on the first violin, while the inner parts are still hinting at the first tune. The second violin then has this second tune and we have had all the material Brahms means to use in this movement.

'Cellos and violas play tune 1 under rapid violin passages, and then a new version of tune 2 in detached notes is heard on the two violins (a repeat a little later on is not observed). The rest of this part presents no difficulty to the listener if the tunes (and the first especially) are clear in the memory.

It must be borne in mind that a string quartet is a republic not a monarchy and one finds now this, now that part coming into prominence and then making way for its neighbours.

Part II.—The recapitulation; both violins play tune 1, and tune 2 appears as before and is then heard high up on the 'cello while the violins play at the same time its abbreviated form. The Coda, after a smooth phrase which seems to be leading us to a peaceful close, is of a dramatic nature but at the very end the music dies down again and the 'cello at a low pitch sings the swan song of the first tune.

Second Movement: Romance (poco adagio).—A typical horn passage opens the Romance and is succeeded by the lovely first violin melody which soon appears in the upper register of the 'cello; the first page of this movement is a gorgeous web of sound.

The second tune has a close relationship with that of the first movement—Brahms so often uses material in this way that the point is not perhaps overstrained—and is confined to the first violin; it is curiously disjointed and inarticulate, but almost before we have realised it we are back to the horn-like melody; here is a good instance of Brahms's fine workmanship, no joins are perceptible.

Part II.—The first violin has some embroidery passages to play over the horn melody of the other strings until the 'cello begins the Romance tune, when the other strings also have their say; the music is broken up by a few bars of arpeggios and then the horn melody returns followed by the Coda, which is made up of the second disjointed tune and a final glance at the opening bars of the movement.

Third Movement (Allegro molto moderato).—This movement is in the usual minuet and trio form. Two themes in combination make up the first idea, one on the first violin of an urgent nature and in two note groups, and the other on the viola, being a more extended and placid melody. After the repeat, which is observed, the 'cello, and then the first violin play the placid tune. Now comes a very delicate and charming piece of writing marked *lusingando* which is, at first, phrase answering phrase on viola and first violin, and then the same thing on both violins. A passage for these two in sixths brings us back to the material previously heard and so this side ends.

Part II.—This, the trio, is more impressive on paper than in performance, or one might say more cerebral than pleasing: the

first violin has the tune, the second harmonics on a repeated note, and the other two strings play pizzicato. It is an unusual background. The trio is short and soon over, and then we return to the minuet section, which goes forward as before.

Part I.—The first tune is made up of a bit of the horn melody which forms the opening bars of the Romance and the last few notes of the first tune of the first movement (notice especially the drop of a seventh at the end), and is an example both of Brahms' economy of mind with regard to his material and his power of extracting the utmost from his ideas.

The movement is very strong and resolute all through and the most difficult to follow without a score, as it is very closely knit together.

There is no way of indicating the second tune except to say that it appears unexpectedly on the second violin and then briefly on the first violin and viola. Not much is ever made of it.

Now comes a third tune marked *tranquillo* and constructed from the first tune, being, indeed, that tune metamorphosed. The second tune is heard again just before and up to the end of this part.

Part II.—Here is tune 3 again followed by a beautiful passage of pure string writing on the upper registers of all the instruments, then we are plunged into the turbulence of the opening tune which leads to the Coda and so to the end of a finely wrought piece of music. (Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 2s.)

COLUMBIA.—L.1520 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**Lener String Quartette**: Quartet in D minor, *Allegretto ma non troppo* (Mozart) and Quartet in A minor, *Andante Moderato* (Brahms).

Mozart Quartet.—An air with variations forming the last movement of this quartet and a precious addition to the repertoire of this master's recorded works. (The Elman quartet have done the minuet on a 10in. disc, H.M.V. 8171.)

It may be news to some people that the minor key is not always a synonym for gloom when they hear this entrancing dance tune; it is in D minor. This is a two-part tune, no return being made to the first section. The first violin takes all the burden of the first variation, which is a dainty embroidery of the air (the first repeat is observed).

The next variation is omitted; this is where the players have that cigarette Mr. Mackenzie speaks of—a complete recording of the whole quartet would have obviated this cruel necessity.

The viola plays the chief part in the next variation, which is full of Mozart's delicate humour. Notice the lovely quality of this too little appreciated instrument.

The next variation is in the *major* key—a simple device which, after what has gone before, gives one a shiver of delight! You will probably go over this variation many times to enjoy the full beauty of the air in its new dress and the sweeping cello and viola passages. The final variation is most dainty and ingenuous. (Beethoven must have had it in his mind in his second Kreutzer Sonata Variation) and the little four note figure heard on all four instruments in the Coda seems to be waving us farewell. The playing and recording are excellent. (Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 1s. 6d.)

Brahm's Quartet, Op. 51, 2.—This quartet is a most disgraceful instance of "cutting" that has come my way for a long time. The movement is 125 bars in all and only 47 of these have been recorded; surely the movement was worthy either of a double-sided record or of not being done at all.

As it is we have, indeed, the lovely tune (and its perfectly conceived accompaniment) which the movement is founded on, but not the working out, which is of the greatest interest and beauty. Therefore apart from the pleasure the melody gives *per se* the record is worthless from the musical point of view. (Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 2s.)

COLUMBIA.—L.1518, 1519 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d. each).—**Miss G. Maso** (harp), with accompaniment for String Quartet, flute, and clarinet: **Ravel Septette.**

This work might well be described as a Concerto for Harp with string and wind accompaniment, for the harp is much in evidence all the way through. Its limitations are very apparent and one soon tires of the inevitable arpeggio, especially as the beautiful liquid tone does not come out well in recording and the percussive quality over-records.

Ravel wrote this work in 1906 and it was one of the items performed at the concert of his works at the Queen's Hall last November.

Part I.—Fragments of two tunes are heard, the first on flute and clarinet and the second on strings in far apart unisons—a very favourite device of Ravel's creating a mysteriously beautiful

atmosphere particularly when the harp comes shimmering through this second tune. The process is now reversed, tune 1 appearing on the strings and tune 2 on the wind with the harp breaking in as before; a third tune for cello with wind, string, and harp accompaniment follows; the first violin repeats this tune which ends the introduction. The allegro begins with the harp playing the second of the tunes of the introduction in quicker time (as implied) and so ends this part.

Part II.—Flute, clarinet and strings continue tune 2 and then flute alone, when, after a harp arpeggio, a fourth tune of dance-like character appears on the flute accompanied by violins pizzicato and harp glissandos; this leads the way to a beautiful statement of the first tune of the introduction on first violin and viola united, the other two strings pizzicato, while the harp plays the second tune against it and this is in turn transferred on to the violins—a little phrase leading back to tune No. 4 is heard and ends this part.

Part III.—The harp plays tune 4 and this is continued alternately on that instrument and on the strings with wind staccato and string pizzicato; it is a pity this passage has not recorded better. After a *rallentando* the clarinet picks up this tune in the original tempo and the music works up to a climax formed by a combination of tunes 2 and 4; a long harp cadenza follows which exploits all the resources of the instrument and displays its limitations also; this part ends with the return of tune 2, first on the harp accompanied by string tremolo and wind shakes and then on wind and strings.

Part IV.—The harp is heard playing tune 2 and later tune 4, which is given afterwards to wind and strings and forms the matter of the final section of the music. As it appears here there is a very curious suggestion of the final variation of Cesar Franck's "Variations Symphoniques," due to the rhythmic lay-out of the tune on the harp.

This is an interesting work to add to one's collection of modern chamber music but one which will need to be played only occasionally; there is very little "meat" in the music. The recording is good except in the strenuous moments, but surely it was not necessary to leave such large unused spaces on the records—why not have had two 10in. discs? This is a very flagrant instance of waste.

COLUMBIA.—L.1515 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**Sir H. J. Wood** conducting the **New Queen's Hall Orchestra.** *Rondino* (for wind instruments) (Beethoven) and *Gavotte in E* (for strings only) (Bach).

Beethoven Octett (Rondino) in E flat major.—Very early Beethoven, written probably between 1785 and 1790. The octett is made up of two each of horns, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, and the record is valuable alone for a study of the tone values of these instruments divorced from their usual setting but apart from this the work is a very genial and charming one, although one feels wood-wind tone soon wearies the ear if heard for any length of time. (It is the lack of the string element that makes the military band so tiresome.) The recording is good except that there is rather a concertina effect in places; the clarinet comes out particularly well.

The Rondo tune is very naive and as the horns colour it even a little hymn-tune; first oboe and first bassoon continue it and then first clarinet and second oboe just before everyone comes in (there is a cut of fifteen bars). First oboe plays a new tune and afterwards the Rondo tune is heard again on the first clarinet with sportive comments from oboe and bassoon; after a *tutti* a tune in the minor is heard on both horns with bassoon accompaniment (4 bars cut) and then (after another cut of fifteen bars) the Rondo tune makes another appearance on the first oboe and second clarinet while the first clarinet provides a delightful and typically clarinety commentary. There is a short Coda (of which 11 bars are cut) and the work is ended by a reminiscence of the Rondo tune on the horns.

It must be admitted that the cutting is not so serious a blemish in this work as in later Beethoven, but any cutting of reputable works is strongly to be deprecated. Every bar of Beethoven's Coda should be left intact whatever else has to go. (Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 1s. 6d.)

Bach Gavotte.—This movement is taken from the Sixth Sonata for violin solo and is already well known in that form (but with piano accompaniment) as played by Kreisler (H.M.V. 07968). Here is a delightful arrangement by Cecil Forsyth, the author of one of the best books on orchestration ever written. The Gavotte is in Rondo form—the initial tune constantly returns—and shows us Bach in happy mood—very much other than the Bach of the Chromatica. The little touch of pizzicato is very happy.

COLUMBIA.—L.1521 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**Arthur Catterall** (violin), **W. H. Squire** (cello), and **William Murdoch** (piano). Trio in C minor, **Minuetto** (Beethoven) and Trio No. 3 in E major, **Andante** (Mozart).

Beethoven Trio.—An enchanting movement with a brilliant piano part. Early Beethoven again (his Op. 1, in fact) and distinctly Haydnesque in feeling; the delicate swirls for the piano in the second half of the Minuet should be noticed; there is no exact repetition of the first half for Beethoven breaks with tradition and adds to and extends his original thought. Each section of both Minuet and the trio following is repeated.

The 'cello has the tune of the trio but the piano has all the fun—rapid scales and arpeggios and at the end a glissando (though not now so played). It is a pity that the piano was not nearer the recording horn as in comparison to the strings it sounds a bit tunnelly; the playing is excellent. (Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 1s. 6d.)

Mozart Trio.—A delightful little movement of crystal clarity in Rondo form; the piano, as in the Beethoven trio, has most of the work to do, the strings usually just commenting on what the piano says; the 'cello has a very thin time of it. The Coda at the end is particularly charming. The balance between strings and piano is much more successful in this work and the playing is first-rate.

COLUMBIA.—L.1523, 1524, 1525, 1526 (12in., d.s., complete in album, 37s. 6d.).—**The Hallé Orchestra**, conducted by **Hamilton Harty**: **From the New World Symphony** (Dvorak, Op. 95).

This is a complete recording and, though it is ungrateful to complain, one heaves a sigh of regret for the Mozart, Haydn, Brahms, or Franck symphony that might have occupied these discs and given us music of really permanent value. Dvorak's tunes are charming and his orchestration admirable; but his constructive powers are decidedly weak, as will be clear to anyone who goes right through these records.

Hamilton Harty's interpretation differs notably from that of Landon Ronald's on the H.M.V. (cut) version and a comparison is most interesting, particularly as regards the Slow Movement (the second part of the Largo on both records). It is, of course, impossible to indicate without music type how this or that point is stressed by either conductor; but I think gramophonists often forget the artistic importance of this personage and this comparison will show them how much he matters.

There seem to be too many technical recording faults, and these are all the more glaring because the general level is high, particularly in the wood-wind section—the oboe and horn tone are splendid.

These faults are: 1. Brass out of tune at the start of the slow movement. 2. Upper register of the strings screechy and give nasty blasts at the opening of the Scherzo. 3. Strings out of tune at the opening of the Finale. These faults all seem to occur at the start of the records. The brass is over-prominent at times, but that, of course, is due to the conductor.

Detailed analysis is hardly necessary in the case of such a well-known and simple work. Everyone will recognise the tunes that are gathered up from other movements in the Finale, and the one which is the motto-theme of the work is heard in every movement. The wood-wind is exquisitely used throughout. The last movement is the weakest and the final bars are only fit for an overture to a pantomime. (Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 6s.)

COLUMBIA.—L.1528 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**Gustav Holst** conducting the **London Symphony Orchestra**: **The Planets**, No. 1, **Mars** (The Bringer of War).

This is the first number of the *Planets* and evidently if the Columbia Company pursue their present modernist policy we shall soon have the whole work recorded; it is to be welcomed as one of the most representative modern British works and even if one feels its appeal is largely due to Holst's very ingenious orchestration rather than its musical content, one is glad the repertoire of modern works is thus being extended.

This is certainly the most effective planet and "wars and rumours of wars" are clearly heard in the sinister 5/4 rhythmic figure with which it opens; this is enhanced by the soft booming of the gong and the directions for the six timpani to play with wooden sticks and the strings col legno (with the stick of the bow). Over this rhythmic figure a gradually ascending sequence of harmonies is heard first on wood-wind and then on the brass and soon comes the clash of arms and we are plunged into the fray. A remarkable passage of moving fifths should be noted on the horns and first trumpet, which soon infects the whole orchestra. A solo for tenor tuba is an unusual feature just after this point.

The first side ends fortuitously where a pause is indicated in the score (and the battle!). Then with the beginning of the next side we have an extraordinary procession of close moving harmonies on the whole orchestra rising to a climax and a recapitulation of the 5/4 figure. From here to the Coda nothing new happens, but the battle rages more fiercely and the music ends with the frenzied reiteration of a crashing discord (the wood-wind are silent, being completely knocked out!) and then—a common chord! The recording of the opening section is excellent and breaks down only in the strenuous passages in a way not intended by the composer. Columbia should pay more attention to these big moments.

VOCALION.—D.02141 (12in., blue, d.s., 6s. 6d.).—**The London String Quartet**: **Quartet in B flat**, Op. 18, No. 6, first and second movements (Beethoven).

This quartet is the last of the set forming Op. 8, of which the first in F was reviewed last month, and the most often played though by no means the most interesting. There are cuts of a more or less damaging nature in both the movements recorded. The recording is clear and the playing sensitive, but the 'cello is often rather indistinct; this is the case, however, in most records of chamber music in which the 'cello appears.

First Movement. *Allegro con brio.*—The work opens with one of Beethoven's widely leaping tunes (it covers over two octaves in five bars) and these big spans are a feature of this movement; the second tune affords a delightful contrast and is laid out in a very interesting way rhythmically; the modulations are beautifully done. So far the first violin has had the lion's share, but in the development of the first tune which follows the interest is more evenly distributed. Beethoven pulls up the music suddenly in two places after the manner of Haydn, and these bars containing only rests are by no means the most ineffective. The whole of the re-appearance of the second tune is cut and a portion of the Coda also.

Second Movement. *Adagio ma non troppo.*—This adagio is not so moving as its companion of the first quartet and the tonal beauty invests it with a deeper emotion than it actually possesses. The second tune in the minor key has none of the essential Beethoven about it and the way it merges into four part harmony after its unison appearance is lovely.

The recapitulation gives us a variant of the first tune but the second, which should be heard in the major key, is cut out and the Coda with it. (Miniature Score, Goodwin and Tabb, 1s. 6d.)

COLUMBIA.—960 (12in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**The Band of the Royal Italian Marines**: **The Egmont Overture** (Beethoven).

This is, of course, a military band transcription and more successful than is usually the case owing to the dramatic nature of the music, but there are always faint exhalations of the "pier-pavilion" in these "arrangements" to say nothing of the violence done to the composer's intentions. Clarinets are poor substitutes for violins and the absence of string tone will be felt all through. Beethoven's music to Goethe's *Egmont* written in 1810 is his most striking contribution to music for the stage, and in both this work and the overture to *Coriolanus* we are left with a definite and vivid impression of the personality he is painting. (Miniature Score, Goodwin and Tabb, 2s.)

A.R.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.785 and 786 (12in., d.s., 6s. 6d. each).—**Royal Albert Hall Orchestra**, conducted by **Sir Edward Elgar**, O.M. In the South—**Overture** (Elgar, Op. 50), in four parts.

This work dates from 1904 and is full of the colour and richness of the warm south. It is as if one started from the hills and the broad expanses of the northern plains and descended to the little villages and pastures of southern Italy, the song of the *contadino* and the cool peace of the flock, while the rumours of ancient Rome sweep through the second part and combine in the last with the pastoral themes and the dancing of the Mediterranean. The recording is excellent throughout, and our only regret is that we could not beg nor borrow a score of the Overture, and that the publishers curtly did "not feel at all called upon to lend our publications for the benefit of those who wish to make use of them for the purpose of their different businesses." The price is a guinea and a half, we may add, in case any reader can afford to buy it and give us a further note on these charming records.

VOCALION.—A.0199 (12in., pink, 8s.).—**Giacomo Rimini** (baritone): **Adamastor, re dell'onde profonde** from *L'Africana* (Meyerbeer).

Rimini is Rosa Raisa's husband, and they sing at the Chicago Civic Opera House. His debut in the Vocalion catalogue is a happy one, and does not betray that unsteadiness of tone which

one was led to expect; but, of course, he is a baritone of international fame, and it must be remembered that Toscanini chose him to play the part of Falstaff at Milan in 1915. There are several other records by him in the American catalogue.

Apropos of this record, we received an "epigramophone" from Oldham the other day:—

"THE GRAMOPHONE subscribers wait in vain;
The dilatory Compton's late again.
His patient readers clamour for reform—
A vain excuse next time a Channel storm!"

to which we replied—

"Dear Sir, the staff refuses to be jumped on,
It goes to press and does not wait for Compton.
What happens down at Jethou may be passed o'er.
Good Luck to Rimini and Adamastor!"

COLUMBIA.—L.1514 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**Ulysses Lappas** (tenor): **Come un bel di** and **Improviso** from **Andrea Chénier** (Giordano).

Two magnificent numbers which make one wonder whether the Editor will retract any of his remarks about Lappas in the next quarterly review. A translation is held over till next month. Recording excellent.

VOCALION.—D.02140 (12in., blue, d.s., 6s. 6d.).—**Armand Tokatyan** (tenor): **Cielo e mar!** from **La Gioconda** (Ponchielli) and **Tarantella Sincera** (Migliaccio-Crescenzo).

The *Tarantella Sincera* is likely to make this record a favourite with those who have not already got Caruso's (H.M.V.) or Ciccolini's (Edison), and the aria from *La Gioconda*, of which a translation is given on another page, is well sung. Tokatyan, who sings at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, has evidently an almost first-rate voice, of the Gigli class; but he is not completely at home in the recording room, and his middle register is far better reproduced than his higher notes which are clearly not given their due by the gramophone.

COLUMBIA.—L.1522 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**The Hallé Orchestra**, conducted by **Hamilton Harty**: **Siegfried's Death March** from **Götterdämmerung** (Wagner).

A fine piece of playing and recording, but somehow, to express a personal feeling, I do not think the *Death March* ever makes a record that one can really treasure.

ZONOPHONE.—A.280 (12in., d.s., 4s.).—**Cecil Sherwood**: **Mother the red wine burns me like fire** from **Cavalleria Rusticana** (Mascagni) and **O Paradise** from **L'Africana** (Meyerbeer).

A most pleasant surprise after the comparative failure of last month's record. Both songs are so finely sung that one hardly notices that they are sung in English. We now understand why Mr. Sherwood's art has been so much appreciated in Italy, that most vocally exacting of countries.

COLUMBIA.—D.1469 (10in., d.s., 5s.).—**Norman Allin** (bass, with piano): **Shepherd, see thy horse's foaming mane** (J.S. of Dale and Korbay) and **The Lute Player** (Watson and Peel).

The unevenness of voice which Mr. Allin sometimes shows in his high notes is apt to detract from the value of his records, but these songs are fair specimens of his singing, showing the fine quality of his voice and the ease of his delivery.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—E.313 (10in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Ben Davies** (tenor): **A Spring Night** (Schumann) and **I attempt from love's sickness to fly** (Purcell, arr. W. H. Cummings).

A wonderfully young voice for such a veteran, and these familiar songs will be welcome to many who enjoy listening to Mr. Ben Davies.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—C.1130 (12in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Sydney Coltham** (tenor): **Margarita** (Löhr) and **Recitative and Air** (O days that ne'er may come again) from Debussy's *L'Enfant Prodigue*.

How oddly staid this early work of Debussy sounds now! It is a lovely air but Mr. Coltham cannot do justice to it in English. *Margarita* is typical Löhr and Mr. Coltham's charming voice deserves better things.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—E.311 (10in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Sarah Fischer** (soprano): (a) **Weep you no more, sad fountains** (Dowland); (b) **Whither runneth my sweetheart** (Bartlett); and (c) **The Peaceful Western Wind** (Campion); (d) **What thing is love?** (Bartlett) from *Elizabethan Love Songs* (arr. F. Keel).

The string quartet accompaniment makes a charming background to Miss Fischer's voice and we welcome an addition to the library of Elizabethan music.

ZONOPHONE.—A.281 (12in., d.s., 4s.).—**Mummery and Richardson**: **I am the King of Spain** from *Maritana* (Wallace) and **Comrade Your Hand from Bohemian Girl** (Balfe).

This is not up to Mummery's usual mark.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.784 (12in., d.s., 6s. 6d.).—**Robert Radford**: **Still is the Night** (Abt) and **Full Fathom Five and Old Clothes and Fine Clothes** (Martin Shaw).

We asked for these Martin Shaw songs in November and here they are but sung by Mr. Radford, not by Mr. Buckley. Perhaps we cannot claim the credit. But they make a very jolly record.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.787 (12in., d.s., 6s. 6d.).—**Leila Megane**: **Land of Hope and Glory** (Elgar) with the **Band of H.M. Coldstream Guards** and **A Summer Night** (Goring Thomas with 'cello obbligato by Cedric Sharpe).

What memories! But beautifully sung, and the piano tone and 'cello obbligato in *A Summer Night* are marvels of recording.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—B.1731 (10 in., d.s., 3s.).—**George Baker** (baritone): **Come Away Death** and (a) **O Mistress Mine**; (b) **Blow, blow, thou winter wind** from *Roger Quilter's Three Shakespeare Songs*.

Really fine singing and recording of these three delightful songs.

FROM THE CO-OPTIMISTS.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—C.1131 (12 in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Stanley Holloway**: **The Wheel Tapper** (Charles) and **Pirate Song** (Gilbert, Turk and Handman) from *The Co-Optimists*.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—B.1725 (10in., d.s., 3s.).—**Melville Gideon**: **Golfing Love** (Gideon); **Stanley Holloway**: **London Town** (Gideon).

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—B.1724 (10in., d.s., 3s.).—**Davy Burnaby**: **Miss Lemon** (Braham); **Elsa Macfarlane** and **Stanley Holloway**: **Memory Street** (Macfarlane).

It is pleasant to come away from the Prince of Wales' Theatre and to listen to the records of the songs that one has enjoyed. The imitations in the *Pirate Song* come out particularly well; *Golfing Love* is a capital song of the Gideon kind, and *London Town*, if not distinguished in its melody, serves to recall the striking performance of Miss Phyllis Monkman in that queer Embankment scene. *The Wheel Tapper* threatens to become the popular ballad of the moment, and as we have the Velvet Face record (Ivor Foster) already, we should have preferred to have a duet on two pianos played by Melville Gideon and Wolseley Charles.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—C.1133 (12in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Chorus Time** (Selection), played by the **Band of the Coldstream Guards**.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—C.1132 (12 in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**London Calling** (Selection), played by the **Mayfair Orchestra**. Adequate records of this very jolly music.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—B.1721 (10in., d.s., 3s.).—**De Groot** and the **Piccadilly Orchestra**: **Der Kasbek** (August-Scholz) and **Danses Tziganes** (Tivadar-Nachéz, Op. 14, No. 1).

We asked for *Der Kasbek* in the November number and though we have not got it as sung by Mr. Victor Henkin, of the Blue Bird (Russian) Company, we have got it most feelingly played by De Groot. A record to buy at once and enjoy.

VOCALION.—R.6130 (10in., blue, d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**The Aeolian Orchestra**: **Russian Folk Songs**, Op. 58 (Liadov).

We have to thank Mr. Cuthbert Whitmore and his Aeolian Orchestra for these daintily played folk-songs which seem to epitomise the Russian character; the *Chant Religieux*, *Chant de Noël*, *Berceuse*, and *Ronde*. They belong to the class of record of which one does not tire. But it is maddening to find the two pieces on each side divided by a gulf which the needle cannot bridge without assistance. Is it necessary—or wise—or kind?

VOCALION.—R.6129 (10 in., blue, d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Sapellnikoff** (piano): **The Musical Box** (Liadov) and **Humoresque**, Op. 10, No. 2 (Tchaikovsky).

Beautifully played and very well recorded, but the *Musical Box* is a sort of joke which hardly deserves the honour.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—B.1722 (10in., d.s., 3s.).—**Una Bourne** (piano): **Menuet Célèbre** (Mozart-Palmgren) and **Evening Whispers** (Palmgren).

Very good indeed, better than the last record of *Sic Cubun Dances*. There is no need to praise the H.M.V. piano tone.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—E.310 (10 in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Cedric Sharpe** ('cello): *Andantino* (Song of the Soul) (Lemare, arr. W. H. Squire) and *Petite Suite de Concert* (Coleridge-Taylor, arr. Sharpe).

Admirers of Mr. Sharpe will find these records well up to expectations. They may be trifles, but they are exquisitely played.

BRUNSWICK.—50031 (12 in., d.s., 8s.).—**Huberman** (violin): *Capriccio Valse*, Op. 17, and *Romance*, second Concerto in D minor, Op. 22 (Wienawski).

An exquisite record.

BRUNSWICK.—50024 (12 in., d.s., 8s.).—**Godowsky** (piano): *Liebestraume* (Liszt) and *Polonaise in A flat* (Chopin).

However tired we may be of *Liebestraume*, M. Godowsky makes us listen and enjoy it again almost as much as on that wonderful occasion when we heard it for the first time. I say "we" not in the journalistic sense, because I don't think anyone has ever resisted its first enchantment.

The *Polonaise in A flat* is impossible to tire of, and it is splendidly played by M. Godowsky.

BRUNSWICK.—15050 (10 in., d.s., 5s. 6d.).—**Lauri-Volpi** (tenor): *Mamma mia che vo sape* (Nutila) and *Carmè* (De Curtis).

I prefer Lauri-Volpi's singing of *Mamma mia* to that of De Lucia. I am not sure that I do not prefer McCormack's *Carmè*, but it is beautifully sung by both artists, and this is a record to possess for lovers of Neapolitan songs.

BRUNSWICK.—13091 (10 in., d.s., 5s. 6d.).—**Marie Tiffany and Male Trio**: *Carry me back to Old Virginny* (Bland) and *My Old Kentucky Home* (Foster).

Marie Tiffany has a very sympathetic and beautiful voice and sings these old songs with the simplicity that best becomes them. The Male Trio supporting her is excellent.

COLUMBIA.—3350 (10 in., d.s., 3s.).—Prelude to Act IV. of *La Traviata* (Verdi) and *Nibelungen March* (Wagner). Band of *R. Marina Italiana*, conducted by C.R.E. Cav. P. C. Achemo.

This splendid band is always worth hearing, and these two well-contrasted selections are played with their usual vitality and warmth of colour.

BRUNSWICK.—2409 (10 in., d.s., 3s. 6d.).—**Frederic Fradkin** (violin): *Berceuse* (De Grassi) and *Nola* (Arndt).

Well played and recorded, but the music is not very interesting.

EDISON RECORDS.

No. 82305 (12s. 6d.).—**Claudia Muzio**: *L'altra Notte in Fondo al Mare* from *Mefistofele* (Boito) and *Che me ne faccio del vostro castello* from *Madame Sans-Gêne* (Giordano). (In Italian.)

No. 51254 (6s. 6d.).—**Ferdinand Himmelreich** (piano): *O Sole Mio* transcription (Di Capua—Himmelreich) and *Victor Young* (piano): *Frühlingsregen* (Fink).

No. 80765 (9s. 6d.).—**Peerless Orchestra**: *Trovatore Selection* (Verdi-Tavan). Parts I and II.

No. 82296 (12s. 6d.).—**Arthur Middleton** (bass-baritone): *The Ringers* (Löhr) and *The Lane to Ballybree* (Speahs).

No. 80772 (9s. 6d.).—**Metropolitan Quartet** (mixed voices): *Somebody Knows* (Ackley) and *Day is Dying in the West* (Sherwin).

No. 82274 (12s. 6d.).—**Albert Spalding** (violin): *Romanza Andaluza* (Sarasate) and *Hungarian Dance No. 6* (Brahms Joachim).

No. 51169 (6s. 6d.).—**R. Huston Ray** (piano): *Concert Fantasie* (Huston Ray): *Alta Hill: Country Gardens* (P. A. Grainger).

No. 80735 (9s. 6d.).—**Vladimir Dubinsky** ('cello): *Romance sans Paroles* (Davidoff) and *Canzonetta* (D'Ambrosio).

No. 82291 (12s. 6d.).—**Claudia Muzio** (soprano): *La Separazione* (Rossini) and *Son Poehi Fiori* from *L'Amico Frit* (Mascagni).

No. 82286 (12s. 6d.).—**Arthur Middleton** (bass-baritone): *The Mighty Deep* (Jude) and *Queen of the Earth* (Pinsuti).

It is hard to choose between the two records of Madame Claudia Muzio. One has the beautiful song from Boito and the other *La Separazione* of Rossini, both perfectly suited to her lovely lyrical voice. Arthur Middleton has excellent diction, and I prefer No. 82286 to 82296. The bass-baritone is an Anglo-Saxon hybrid, and is really a short baritone with rather artificial high notes.

The piano records are, as usual, remarkable from the recording point of view but the music is mostly sorry stuff. 51254 is the better of the two. Albert Spalding's record is very fine, and the Peerless Orchestra play the *Trovatore Selection* well. The Metropolitan Quartet is delightful.

A BATCH OF BALLADS

VOCALION.—R.6127 (10 in., blue, d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**J. C. Thomas** (baritone): *Trees* (Tours) and *If you only knew* (Fleeson—Von Titzer).

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—B.1723 (10 in., d.s., 3s.).—**Peter Dawson** (bass-baritone): *The Lament of Shah Jehan* (Landon Ronald), Parts 1 and 2.

ZONOPHONE.—2403 (10 in., d.s., 2s. 6d.).—**Frank Webster**: *In Summer Time on Bredon* (Graham Peel) and *Passing By* (Edward C. Purcell).

VOCALION.—R.6128 (10 in., blue, d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**McEachern** (bass): *Young Tom o' Devon* (Kennedy Russell) and *The Golden City of St. Mary* from *Songs of a Rover* (Coningsby Clarke).

VOCALION.—K.05085 (12 in., black, d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Ethel Hook** (contralto): *Three Fishers* (Hullah) and *Angus Macdonald* (Roeckel).

VOCALION.—X.9384 (10 in., black, d.s., 3s.).—**Eric Marshall** (baritone): *Roadways* (Löhr) and *Never Mind* (D'Hardelot).

Mr. Thomas is a newcomer and has made a big reputation in musical comedy in America. No wonder—he has a splendid voice, and must be persuaded to sing something better than this rubbish. Peter Dawson scores a success with Sir Landon Ronald's *The Lament of Shah Jehan*. If you have not got Gervase Elwes' record of *In Summer Time*—a very old favourite—Frank Webster's singing of it will please you. But somehow he seems not to feel the depths of the words and the rather obtrusive bells do not add much to the poignancy of the song. McEachern is in excellent form this month.

PATHE.—5780 (12 in. d.s. 4s. 6d.).—**M. Buica** (Violin). *Largo* (Sivetera). *Allegro Moderato* (Sivetera).

These movements from the famous Quartet in E minor have been skilfully arranged for violin solo, and though we can have them in their original form, (the Glouzalay Quartet have recorded the *Allegro Moderato alla Polka*), they are very well played by M. Buica.

PATHE.—5779 (12 in. d.s. 4s. 6d.).—**Pathé Symphony Orchestra**. *Fantasy* (2 parts) *Gioconda* (Ponchielli).

A very fine piece of recording.

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HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—C.1134 and 1135 (12 in., d.s., 4s. 6d. each).—**His Majesty's Theatre Orchestra** (Percy Fletcher): *Hassan* (Delius) Selection in Four Parts.

[Communicated.]

As a member of the "Hassan" Company, hearing the Delius music eight times a week, I can safely say that I consider the new H.M.V. records (by Mr. Percy Fletcher, the orchestra and chorus of His Majesty's Theatre), on the whole, extremely good. Perhaps the orchestral record seems more satisfying than the vocal (except for the solo work in the latter), but in stating this I am casting no reflection on the ability of the members of the chorus, knowing them to be first-rate singers. The general effect, whenever the chorus enters, is one of "smudginess." On my Orchestrphone I get the impression of the voices coming from a distance through a tunnel. This is particularly noticeable in "Daughters of Delight" (in the ballet section) and in "We take the Golden Road to Samarkand."

Taking each record in order, the Prelude to Act I. (to me, one of the gems), with the "Samarkand" phrase breathed out softly at the end by the clarinet, is very faithfully recorded. The same applies to the Prelude to Act V. (curtailed), the "Procession of Protracted Death" (with its grim three-note phrase on the Xylophone) and the "Entry of the Soldiers," which gains considerably in brilliance and force by the exclusion of the vocal parts. The last number, judged as a piece of recording, is perhaps the most satisfying of all the orchestral items.

The "Serenade," I think, loses through reverting to the original conception of a tenor voice singing the melody. Though beautifully sung, the music in this version tends to a cheapness which is absent in the present version used at His Majesty's (orchestra alone against Hassan's speaking voice). The effect, strangely enough, is of an inferior type of Italian boat-song, and one visualises Giulietta and her lover crossing the stage in a gondola.

The defect of the voices in "Samarkand" I have already mentioned, but the crisp notes of the harp ticking out the octaves at the end is particularly well recorded. The ballet numbers, except for the inferior reproduction of the women's voices in the "Daughters of Delight" section, are most exhilarating. The superb diction of Mr. Baker in the thankless voice part of the Chief Beggar, the gusto of the male unison passages at the beginning of the Bacchanale, cutting like a knife across the orchestral texture, the clean-cut brilliance of the Xylophone, the sweeping glissandi on the harp, all these make one wonder at the perfection of the recording. It is unfortunate that the finale could not be recorded as it is sung in the theatre. As may be remembered, the sopranos after holding a top G for two bars, sweep up with the whole of the chorus to a great shriek of "Ah!" musically in the region of B natural. I understand the thrilling effect was tried in recording, as was also a purely musical portamento up to B, but both failed. The final result as now recorded is that the sopranos drop from G to F sharp and the thrill is lost. It might perhaps have been obtained by a cymbal crash coinciding with the last note, as in the "Entry of the Soldiers." At least it would have given a touch of finality to the number which is at present lacking.

In considering the records as a whole, two special points strike me. One is the fact that the difficulty of timpani recording has not yet been perfected. Resonance is still lacking. A stroke becomes a heavy bump, as in the Prelude to Act I. and the "Procession of Protracted Death," and a roll and a rattle of tin trays, as in the Prelude to *Die Walkure* (H.M.V.). The other fact is the enormous strides made in the recording of the harp. The beauty of tone and entire absence of "breaking" and "cracking" is remarkable. Contrast the harp in these records of *Hassan* and the lately issued *Ravel Septet* (Columbia) with that in the *Tannhäuser* Vennsberg Music and Arthur Bliss' *Madam Noy* (both Columbia).

In conclusion, while acknowledging the nine recorded numbers as a splendidly representative selection of the *Hassan* music, I cannot help shedding a silent tear that the, to me, most beautiful number of all, the unaccompanied chorus sung "off" in the first "Street of Felicity" scene, has not been selected to be handed down to posterity as an example of the supreme in Delius' exquisite genius.

DOUGLAS BURBIDGE.

His Majesty's,
Jan., 1924.



DANCE RECORDS

The following list of records received gives some idea of the output, and presumably of the varied demand for dances. They have been carefully tested and are marked with two asterisks for first class and one for second. Fox trots unless otherwise stated.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE (10in., d.s., 3s.).

Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra, "Cut Yourself a Piece of Cake" (1729), "Bajadere" Medley (1732), "I Love You" (1740), "Shake your Feet" and "Swanee River Blues" (1741), and "Little Butterfly" (1742).

Zez Confrey and his Orchestra, "Rosetime and You" (1742) and "Oh! Harold!" (1739).

Jack Hylton and his Orchestra, "Southern Rose" and "Somewhere in Naples" (1726), "Honey, dat's all" and "Night Night" (1727), "Moon Love" and "When you and I were Dancing" (1743).

Brooke Johns and his Orchestra, "Bébé" (1739).

The Benson Orchestra of Chicago, "Midnight Rose" (1728), "Oh, you little Sun-uv-er-Gun" (1729), "Just for a While" (1730), and "Somebody's Wrong" (1740).

The Troubadours, "Just a Girl that Men Forget" (waltz) (1730).

The Great White Way Orchestra, "When June comes along with a Song" (1728).

The "S.S. Leviathan" Orchestra, "Tell me a Story" (1732).

The Garber-Davis Orchestra, "Oh, Gee, Oh gosh, Oh golly, I'm in Love" (1733).

The Manhattan Merry-makers, "Maggie! (Yes, Ma'am!)" (1733).

The Albany Dance Orchestra, "Who Cares?" and "Romany Rose" (waltz) (1745), "Nights in the Woods" and "Pan" (1744).

VOCALION (10in., d.s., 3s.).

X.9385.—*The Ambassadors*, "Steamboat Sal" and "Foolish Child." Both**

X.9386.—*The Broadway Syncopaters*, "Bit by bit you're Breaking my Heart," and *The Bar Harbor Society Orchestra*, "I Love You."**

X.9387.—*The Broadway Syncopaters*, "Since When," and *Albert Short and His Tivoli Syncopaters*, "Love" ("My Heart is Calling You").*

BRUNSWICK (10in., d.s., 3s. 6d.).

2472.—*Bennie Krueger's Orchestra*, "Love" ("My Heart is Calling You") and "Mad."**

ZONOPHONE (10in., d.s., 2s. 6d.).

2409.—*Queen's Dance Orchestra*, "No! No! Norah" and "Love Tales."

2411.—*Original Capitol Orchestra*, "House of David" (Blues), and "Bye Bye."

EDISON (10in., d.s., 6s. 6d.).

51247.—*The Jazz-o-Harmonists*, "Darktown Reveille" and "Salt your Sugar."**

51260.—*Kaplan's Melodists*, "Sweet Butter" and "You've simply got me Cuckoo."**

51237.—*Don Parker's Orchestra*, "Covered Wagon Days" and *Broadway Dance Orchestra*, "Music of Love."*

51243.—*Harry Barth's Mississippians*, "Indiana Love" and "Drigo's Serenade."

51192.—*Ray Perkins* (piano solo), "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" and "March of the Mannequins."**

COLUMBIA (10in., d.s., 3s.).

3351.—*The Savoy Havana Band at the Savoy Hotel, London*, "I Love Me" and "Whistling."**

3359.—*The Savoy Orpheans at the Savoy Hotel, London*, "First, Last and Always" and "Dreams of India."**

IMPERIAL (10in., d.s., 2s.).

1219.—*Knickerbocker Grill Orchestra*, "Beside a Babbling Brook," and *Hollywood Dance Orchestra*, "When June comes along with a Song."

1222.—*Pavilion Royal Orchestra*, "Bébé," and *Hollywood Dance Orchestra*, "Last Night in the Old Back Porch."*

1221.—*Xylo Novelty Orchestra*, "Dreamy Melody" (Waltz), and *Majestic Dance Orchestra*, "Roses of Picardy."

1218.—*Six Black Diamonds*, "No, No, Nora," and *Roy Collins' Orchestra*, "That Old Gang of Mine."*

ACTUELLE (10in., d.s., 2s. 6d.).

10557.—*Casino Dance Orchestra*, "Cut yourself a piece of Cake" and "Stealing Back to Virginia."

10505.—*Original Memphis Five*, "Great White Way Blues" and "Railroad Man."*

10560.—*Lanin's Arcadians*, "Oh Gee, Oh Gosh" and "Annabelle."

PATHÉ (10in., d.s., 2s. 6d.).

1742.—*Original Memphis Five*, "That Red Headed Girl" and "I never Miss the Sunshine."*

1738.—*Burt's Adelpia Orchestra*, "Swinging Down the Lane," and *Lanin's Arcadians*, "Morning Will Come."*

1744.—*Max Terr and His Orchestra*, "Isle of Sweethearts" (Waltz) and "Just for a While" (Waltz).

WINNER (10in., d.s., 2s. 6d.).

3947.—*Regent Orchestra*, "Burning Sands" and "Carolina Home."*

3948.—*Diplomat Orchestra*, "Brokenhearted Blues" and "I've got the Yes, We have no Bananas Blues."**

Gramophone Societies' Reports

WILL Recording Secretaries please note that reports should be sent to THE GRAMOPHONE, 25, Newman Street, London, W. 1 (not to the Channel Islands) by the 15th of each month, and also that short reports are more popular in the office than full ones?

I have had a letter from Mr. Herbert H. Wardle (Thurston Villa, Elmdale Road, Palmers Green, N.) suggesting that a G.S. should be started in North Middlesex to include the district of Wood Green, Bowes Park, Palmers Green, Southgate, and Winchmore Hill, and asking that the secretaries of some existing Societies should send him a copy of their rules, for which he will gladly pay postage.

In answer to my previous enquiries, I have received information which shows that in most Societies traders are encouraged to co-operate in every way, and in many cases are eligible for all offices except those of President and Secretary; and secondly, that the membership of Societies varies in size as much as I expected, from the thirty of beginners, through the fifty to eighty stage of most London G.S.'s, to the four hundreds of places like Bradford. There are indications in several quarters of a faint reaction from uniformly serious programmes, and if Societies are to maintain their vitality and to avoid even a shadow of hypocrisy they will have to be careful not to let the highbrows have it all their own way. The enjoyment of programmes must be genuine and sustained.

On January 14th the SOUTH-EAST LONDON RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY had a lecture-demonstration from Mr. Walter Yeomans (who has contributed to THE GRAMOPHONE once or twice under a pseudonym) on Bach and Handel, with the following programme of illustrations:—Part I: *Old Folks at Home* (Alma Gluck) (violin obligato by Zimbalist).—Part II. (BACH): *Largo from Concerto in D minor for Two Violins*, Kreisler and Zimbalist; *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G for String Orchestra*, Royal Albert Hall Orchestra; *Harpsichord Fugue in E minor*, Mrs. Violet Gordon Woodhouse; *First Movement of Sonata No. 1 in G minor for violin alone*, Isolde Menges; *Organ Fugue in C minor arranged for Orchestra by Elgar*, Symphony Orchestra.—Part III.: *The Acclamation of Sachs from "The Mastersingers"* (Wagner), Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates; *The Quintet from Act III—"The Mastersingers,"* Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates.—Part IV. (HANDEL): *The Harmonious Blacksmith Variation for Harpsichord*, Mrs. Violet Gordon Woodhouse; *Slow Movement from Sonata for Violin*, Isolde Menges; *For Behold Darkness and The People that Walked in Darkness*, Robert Radford; *Choruses from the Messiah*, Choir and Royal Albert Hall Orchestra. Even without Mr. Yeoman's comment this programme must have proved highly interesting to the audience which the indefatigable Secretary, Mr. Ernest Baker, 42, Chalsey Road, Brockley, S.E. 4, brought together.

CITY OF LEEDS GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—The first of the "Members only" nights, held first Tuesday of the month in the Y.M.C.A., proved very interesting and instructive. A paper was given by Mr. Smith on the Principles of Gramophone Construction. By means of charts Mr. Smith showed how to avoid mistakes in the construction of what he thought one of the main faults in many gramophones—the amplifier. The discussion which followed the close of his remarks was of exceptional interest to us all. An Exhibition Sound-box was unstrung and new diaphragm inserted. An excellent batch of Re-creation discs was played over on the Society's machine by means of the Jewel Sound-box. Altogether a most enjoyable evening. The Recital held on December 18th, in the Cinema Exchange, consisted of some twenty-one items submitted by individual members, "favourite records." They formed a very comprehensive audience assembled. One outstanding feature, perhaps, was

the number of Edison Re-creations sent by the members. Played on the Society's machine by means of the Clarivox Sound-box, their faithful tonal qualities were apparent to all. Principal items were: *Sonata in D major*, violin—I. Menges (H.M.V.); *Suite in A major*, piano—M. Hambourg (H.M.V.); *Serenade de Don Juan*, tenor—E. Caruso (H.M.V.); *Hagen's Watch*, bass—Norman Allin (Col.); *Adelaide*, cello—J. Berger (Scala); *Gloria Twelfth Mass*, choir—Gregorian Choir (Edison); *I hear you calling me*, soprano—E. Spencer (Edison); *Dio Possente*, baritone—T. Chalmers (Edison); *If with all your hearts*, tenor—R. Miller (Edison); *Antony's Address over Caesar*, talking—H. Humphrey (Edison); *Mill in the Forest*, band—Royal Artillery Band (Voc.). The Vice-President, during the evening, moved a vote of thanks to the Secretary for his untiring efforts on the Society's behalf. All interested in recorded music may be admitted to the Society meetings by tickets from Mr. H. Hainsworth, 9, Dorset Avenue, Harehills, Leeds.—B. McNATTY PALMER, *Hon. Recording Secretary*.

MANCHESTER GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The December meeting was held in the Onward Hall, Deansgate, on the 17th inst, under the direction of Messrs. Forsyth Bros., Ltd., who demonstrated, under the control of Mr. Moses Baritz, the various new models and records of the Columbia Company. In view of the opinions of famous musicians passed upon them, criticism would appear unnecessary, nevertheless one ventures to indicate, that while there has been an obvious improvement in the surface of the disc, their "New Box," in conjunction with the "New Model," left the hearer disappointed in view of the expectancy of something wonderfully unique. The tone, with steel needles, was exceptionally keen and clear, of good volume, agreeably surprising at first, but the continuity of unvaried metallic tone somehow set the listener on edge, stringed instruments in particular revealing a "wiry tone." The large Cabinet gave the most satisfactory results in every way, although even there the box, upon heavy vocal tones, buzzed at times. From a judiciously arranged programme the under-noted truly displayed the abilities of the various artists and are worthy of rank in the most artistic collection:—Vocal: *Solveig's Song*, Dora Labette; *Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster*, Stralia; *Recondita Armonia*, Lappas; *Hagen's Call*, Norman Allin. Instrumental: *Spring Song*, Cherniavsky Trio; *Quartette D major* (Borodin), Lener Q. Piano: *Hungarian Fantasy*, P. Grainger.—STANLEY E. HARPER, *Recording Secretary*.

SHEFFIELD GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—Our December meeting was held on the 18th at Stephenson's Restaurant as usual, the undersigned being responsible for the programme on this occasion. The records selected were as varied as possible, consistent with good taste, so as to avoid a flagging of interest, and they included *Sempre Libera* (Traviata) by Galli-Curci; *Ombra Mai Fu* (Caruso); *Serenade-Waltz* (Heifetz); *I Love Someone in Somerset* (E. Butcher); also other items by Galli-Curci, Caruso, Paderewski, Coldstream Guards Band, etc., etc. The competition was full of good things in that it comprised the records that had won the previous contests during the present year. Under the new system of judging, Messrs. Holmes, Scott, and the writer were nominated to make the decision, and their choice rested with *Drink to Me Only*, a record by the Flonzaley Quartet. It is really a very fine record and should be numbered amongst everyone's collection. A selection of the H.M.V. December issues brought a successful meeting to a close. Prospective members are welcomed; the subscription should not stand in their way, being only 4s. for gentlemen and 2s. for ladies. Please communicate with the Secretary, Mr. H. Acton, 48, Idsworth Road, Pitsmoor, Sheffield.—THOS. H. BROOKS, *Hon. Recording Secretary*.

CANTERBURY AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The nearness of Christmas had a somewhat adverse effect on the attendance at the December meeting on the 17th, but in spite of this there was an audience of nearly thirty members. The programme was provided by Mr. and Mrs. James, on their own H.M.V. Table Grand machine, and consisted of a very varied selection of records of a somewhat more "homely" type than have hitherto figured on the Society's programmes. Judging from remarks passed after the concert, the introduction of lighter music was highly appreciated by those present, providing a relief from the "high-brow" type of programme which has hitherto provided the Society's staple fare, in which respect the present writer has been the chief offender. The Record Lending Library is proving a great success, and we have been hoping to read in your columns that other Societies have adopted a similar scheme. The writer will be pleased to give particulars of our scheme to Secretaries and others who may be interested.—GEO. S. STEDDY, *Hon. Secretary*, 53, St. Augustine's Road, Canterbury.

SOUTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—Meeting held on December 29th, 1923. Miss Woolgar's programme ("Exhibition No. 2" Sound-box, Columbia "Ideal" needles): *Overture—Ruslan u Ludmila*, Symphony Orch. (H.M.V.); *The Snow Maiden*, Symphony Orch. (H.M.V.); *Oh di qual onta*, Russ and Nani (Fono.); *Der Kleine Sandmann*, Gluck and Homer (H.M.V.); Parts 3 and 4, *Saint-Saens' Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor*, De Greef; *Il Dolce Idillio*, Farrar and Amato (H.M.V.); *Largo al Factotum*, Titta Ruffo (H.M.V.); *On Wings of Song*, Heifetz (H.M.V.); *Chi raffrena*, Tetrizzini, Caruso, Amato, Journet, etc. Mr. H. Osborne's programme ("Exhibition No. 2" Sound-box, steel needles): *Sicilian Vespers*, Coldstream Guards (H.M.V.); *Agnus Dei*, Heink (H.M.V.); *Una furtiva lagrima*, Carpi (Fono.); *Grieg's Piano Concerto A minor, Op. 16*, De Greef (H.M.V.); *Ah! non mi ridestar*, Polverosi (Fono.); *O mio piccolo*, Perea (Fono.); *Finale—Manon Lescaut*, Italian Marines (Fono.); *E il sol dell'anima*, Perosio and Polverosi (Fono.). Mr. G. W. Webb's programme (all Columbia) ("Exhibition No. 2" Sound-box, steel needles): *Merchant of Venice*—suite, New Queen's Hall Light Orchestra; *Tit Willow*, Harold Williams; *Waltz in A major*, Brahms Bratza; *The Golden Song*, Dora Labbette and Hubert Eisell; *The Meanderings of Monty*—Part 3, Milton Hayes; *Phantasie*, English String Quartette; *Musical Jig-Saw*, Court Symphony Orchestra. Miss J. Woolgar's programme was well selected and contained one or two real gems. The duet by Russ and Nani on *Fonotipia* (*Oh di qual onta*) and the sextette of Donizetti's *Chi raffrena* from *Lucia di Lammermoor* (H.M.V.) may be specially noted. Mr. Webb, our President, was daring enough to offer something light and more or less British. The company laughed in spite of itself at *The Meanderings of Monty*, and even recognised the popular song items included in Aston's *Musical Jigsaw*. It was, however, the Scala "laughing" record (offered anonymously) which caused the South London folk to forget that they were "high-brows."—HERBERT R. PARSONS, *Hon. Recording Secretary*.

BRIXTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The annual general meeting was held on January 5th at headquarters, when the election of officers for the ensuing year took place. This resulted as follows: President, Mr. A. H. Mackenzie; Hon. Sec. and Treas., Mr. J. T. Fisher; both of whom held these offices last year. The new committee consists of Messrs. S. N. Collins, W. B. Parkin, and G. W. Webb, all three having also served last year. Owing to the much regretted resignation of Mr. S. F. D. Howarth, who is no longer able to undertake the duties of Recording Secretary, the undersigned has been elected *pro tem* and will attempt to fill the gap.

The allied questions of finance and headquarters occupied a considerable part of the time devoted to business, the main theme of an animated discussion being the possibility of finding more attractive quarters for this comparatively small but keenly enthusiastic Society. The Committee trusts soon

to be able to announce the result of their search for a really suitable meeting place, so that the Society can happily settle down to progressive work.—GEO. W. WEBB.

THE NORTH LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—For the first time before any talking-machine society, the Gramophone Company, in the person of its representative, Mr. Rink, gave a lecture and demonstration at our headquarters on Saturday, January 12th. Three superb pedestal cabinets and a table instrument were furnished by the company for the demonstration, and a very large audience of members and friends assembled and appreciated the programme. The hon. chairman (Mr. L. Ivory) introduced Mr. Rink, who at once began an interesting if brief account of the early history and evolution of the gramophone, in which the part played by the great Gramophone Company was duly described. An amusing incident was the playing of a record of an old time popular song entitled "Her Golden Hair was Hanging Down her Back." Much laughter greeted this example of recording, especially from those who remembered the song in its hey-day. We learned several interesting facts from Mr. Rink concerning the difficulties met and overcome by the company in inducing the world's greatest artistes to submit their voices to be permanently preserved for the public. The one-time inimitable Dan Leno was recorded in 1900. Several of the world's sweetest singers, although finally persuaded to have their voices recorded, nevertheless insisted upon the operation being performed in their own homes, instead of in the properly equipped recording room; hence the comparative mediocrity of some early specimens of recording. Happily all that is altered now. Mr. Rink gave examples of three records, viz.: Classical music, ballads and syncopated music, actually accompanied by himself on the pianoforte, a most meritorious performance, which was followed by the synchronisation of two instruments in order to show the perfection of the model motor. Two copies of the same record were placed on the turntables of two instruments, side by side; both motors were then started up, and the records were played through without the least variation of time or tone. During the interval Mr. Rink was besieged by an eager crowd for information upon various points in connection with the subject matter of the demonstration, which he gave in a lucid and convincing manner. The second part of the programme consisted of a demonstration of the following records. (Note.—The titles marked X were not played, owing to time limits.)—WILLIAM J. ROBINS (*Hon. Rec. Sec.*).

Programme.—1. Moiseivitch, *Impromptu in F sharp* (D.735) (Chopin). X2. Martinelli, *Ideale Melodia* (7-52067) (Tosti). 3. Heifetz, *Ronde des Lutins* (2-07962) (Bazzini). 4. Caruso, *Prête-moi ton aide* (2-032021) (Gounod). 5. Destinn and McCormack, *Mira la bianca luna* (2-054019) (Rossini). 6. Royal Albert Hall Orchestra, *L'apprenti sorcier* (D.461) (Dukas). X7. Alma Gluck, *Bird Song*—Pagliacci (2-053066) (Leoncavallo). 8. Amato, *Largo al factotum* (2-052051) (Rossini). 9. Elman String Quartet, *Andante Cantabile* (08074) (Tchaikovsky). 10. Galli Curci, *Io son Titania* (2-053186) (Thomas). 11. Flonzaley Quartet, *Drink to me only* (8274) (Hullah). X12. Caruso and Ancona, *Del Tempio al limitar* (054134) (Bizet). X13. Julia Culp, *All through the night* (2-3027) (Old Welsh Air). X14. Hislop, *Eriskay Love Lilt* (5-2568) (Kennedy Fraser). X15. Symphony Orchestra, *Caprice Italien* (D.124) (Tchaikovsky). 16. Caruso and Elman, *Ave Maria* (02472) (Kahn).

* * *

Will "Croindene" (January number, p. 169) please send us his name and address, and will he communicate with Mr. Leslie S. Carter, 4, Duppas Hill Road, East Croydon, with regard to the formation of a Croydon Gramophone Society?

Mr. Ernest Baker's full account of the Bach and Handel lecture at the South-East London Society meeting on January 14th is held over till the March number.

HELOT.

CORRESPONDENCE

De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, *The Gramophone*, 25, Newman Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of a manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

CONGRATULATIONS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Very many thanks for the Xmas card and good wishes, which are heartily reciprocated to yourself and the staff of your excellent paper. Your thought in sending out such a little gem only emphasises the peculiar character of your periodical; one does not feel it to be a commercial enterprise, so much as a friendly organisation to which we all belong. May the New Year hold much happiness and prosperity to yourself and your worthy staff, and bring you that increase in circulation which will enable you not only to increase the musical appreciation of many more users of the Gramophone, but also reward in a suitable way the services of your staff and your own services likewise.

In this connection I should like to make a suggestion, that many of our readers should send a P. O. for 2s. 6d. together with the names of four friends who do not take THE GRAMOPHONE but who ought to do. This would enable you, without further expense to yourselves, to send a sample copy, with a circular letter suitably worded, to many who very probably may become subscribers. As a start please find my contribution and at the end the names and addresses of four likely friends.

I have just been reading your "topping" article in *John o'London's Weekly* (Xmas number) which ought to be reprinted in THE GRAMOPHONE. Now why can't you copy the "Questions and Answers" department of that very fine journal? The idea is not original, someone else has already suggested it, but it would be most helpful to be able to find out all sorts of odds and ends from readers who might have the information, such as, the words of a song, if a certain record of a certain piece is in existence, etc.

If I am not getting out of bounds, I would also like to suggest that the greatest care should be used in keeping the reading matter and the advertisements on separate sheets, so that when bound, I shall not turn over from the middle of a thrilling portion of your autobiography to find a half page of Columbia New Process Records. I know it is a difficult proposition, but for a paper like THE GRAMOPHONE a serious attempt should be made.

The only grumble I have at your (or our!) paper is, it doesn't come often enough. It is the most instructive, yet entertaining musical paper published, and I hope its circulation will so increase as to enable you to perform that service to the gramophone public which I believe is your desire, for I believe you are sincere when you say in your *Jack o'London's Weekly* article referred to, that it has been "a privilege."

With the best of wishes to yourself and staff,

Yours faithfully,

J. R.

MISCELLANIES.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Thank you a thousand times for your new publication, THE GRAMOPHONE: it has filled a long felt want and is apparently (and most deservedly so) being most enthusiastically received by gramophone music lovers, including Mr. Gilman to whom I had the pleasure of introducing it and from whom I see a letter in the January issue. Thank you also for promising not to inflict us with wireless matters, but *must* we really have a player-piano section? Surely by now the gramophone has a wide enough following to deserve one paper devoted entirely to its interests!

Looking back over the last twelve months one can't help noticing what a big advance has been made in the recording of big works. Special thanks I think are due to the Gramophone Company for the "Mastersingers" issue which is easily the greatest feat yet successfully attempted in the recording world. Nor must we forget the previous Wagner supplements and the wonderful set of Tchaikovsky's *Sixth Symphony* by the Albert

Hall Orchestra under Sir Landon Ronald, which, in my opinion, sets a new standard in orchestral recording. Further, all these records are extremely good value at 6s. 6d. double-sided, especially when one takes into consideration that before the war one cheerfully paid 5s. 6d. for a 12in. black label single-sided record. In the cheaper series, too, the same applies: this month we are given a capital rendering by George Bakér of Roger Quilter's *Three Shakespeare Songs* complete on one 10in. double-sided disc at 3s. For the same price we are offered a superb record of Sir Landon Ronald's *Lament of Shah Jehan* by Peter Dawson, and last month five of W. G. James's *Australian Bush Songs* on one 12in. double-sided disc at 4s. 6d. by the same artist. In these songs Dawson seems to get the right atmosphere, and I sincerely recommend this record, as also his 10in. of Vaughan Williams' *Silent Noon*. From Columbia we get the wonderful new surface, but would this enterprising company please note that the record buying public wants music as well as silent surfaces? It is ridiculous to charge 7s. 6d. for a double-sided 12in. record with an inch or so of recorded space on each side. This has been a habit of Columbia for years—examples; the Ravel Septette issued this month, Coates' *Scheherazade*, Gervase Elwes' *Fill a Glass*, etc. Why also in the name of everything that is good and holy are we offered by the same company new sets of *Peer Gynt—Suite* and *William Tell Overture* and each unnecessarily cut? Surely these, if they are to be done again, should be recorded complete. On the whole I think the most satisfactory Columbia records recently issued are Liza Lehmann's setting of H. Belloc's *Four Cautionary Tales and a Moral*, sung by Harold Williams, and Edgar Coyle's record of Keel's *Salt Water Ballads*, or rather two of them—I wish we could have the third, *Mother Carey*. The same singer also gives us capital renderings of Lane Wilson's arrangements of *Four Old English Songs*, but why an orchestral accompaniment?

I should like to recommend to your readers a few inexpensive records from foreign lists (H.M.V. and Victor), all of which can be specially obtained through any H.M.V. dealer at a cost of about twenty per cent. above the English equivalent prices, and from whom the necessary list can be got. From the French No. K.2136 *La Paimpolaise* and *Dors, mon gâs—Berceuse*, sung and composed by Theodore Botrel, *Le Barde Breton* (10in. green label—plum equivalent), No. P.404 *La Paix* (Hahn) and *Les Larmes*, (Reyer) sung by Reynaldo Hahn (10in. black). The latter, I believe, are self accompanied and the composer-singer a perfect artist. From the Victor catalogue I recommend John Barnes Wells' record of three songs of his own composition: (1) *The Owl* (2) *Crow's Egg* (3) *Why?* All these are on one side of the record, and on the reverse an old favourite *Long ago in Alcala*. His *Boat Song* and *Joy of the Morning*, both composed and accompanied by Harriet Ware are well worth having. The set of some American Indian songs are most attractive and include *By the Weeping Waters*, *By the Waters of Minnetonka*, *A Sioux Serenade*, and four short songs all with piano accompaniment by the composer, Thurlow Lieurance, and flute obligato. The songs are beautifully sung by Princess Watahwaso and occupy five sides: on the sixth we get four Penobscot tribal songs with spoken announcements by the singer, who has a fine mezzo-soprano voice and records particularly well. The Victor Symphony Orchestra give a capital rendering of the *Semiramide* and *Forza del Destino* overtures, and from a point of view of recording, can hardly be surpassed. With the exception of the last, which is a 12in., all the Victors I have mentioned are 10in. double-sided black label, which are equivalent to plum in this country. With best wishes for your continued success, and may THE GRAMOPHONE put on weight each month.

Yours faithfully,

MOORE ORR.

West Acton.

SHORT MEASURE

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Your magazine is a priceless boon to grumblers like myself who desire to vent their feelings and, incidentally, I think it will be valuable to the manufacturers by showing them what their public is thinking about.

I have had the pleasure of hearing a number of the Columbia records for January. The list was a splendid one, but the records which, I think, interested me more than any were those of the Ravel Septette. The music is almost uncannily beautiful and the playing as near perfection as can be attained in a concerted piece, but my grumble is with regard to the amount of latent music upon each of the records. I do not know who is responsible whether it

is the company or the performers or an official, and I do not like to use such a strong expression as a fraud on the gramophone public, but it really does seem to me that the shortness of the records approaches that description. If I had ordered them without hearing, which might easily have happened, I should certainly have felt so. I played the records at 78 revolutions per minute, although the pace stated is 80. If correctly played it would therefore be, according to my calculations, about one-sixteenth shorter in time. Played at 78 these are the times:—First part, 2 min. 22 sec.; second part, 2 min. 22 sec.; third part, 3 min. 19 sec.; fourth part, 1 min. 51 sec.; total 9 min. 58 sec.; just under 2½ min. each side for a 12in. record. The first side of the *Siegfried Funeral March* record played at the same pace takes exactly 4½ min. for one side, and the first side of *Egmont* 4 min. 35 sec. It is, therefore, pretty clear that the two sides of one 12in. record would have held the whole piece. One feels in cases like this that one would desire the Food and Drug Acts to apply to records, so that they should not, by law, be permitted to give short measure.

One of the most cogent criticisms of THE GRAMOPHONE, and one that does not apply to its coming great competitor, "listening in," is that one has to keep continually getting up to put on a new pin or to change the record. It would be thought then that every effort would be made by the gramophone companies to extend the length of the records to the full extent that mechanical difficulties would permit, instead of which one has the mortifying spectacle of seeing a record of perfect loveliness with half of its faces bare. If I could afford it I should certainly much have preferred paying the 15s. for one record than the same sum for the same length chopped into four. But why should this record be more than 7s. 6d.? I am quite convinced that at 7s. 6d. no gramophone lover could afford to be without it, and the company would sell, I have little doubt, more than ten times as many copies. It would only take ten minutes of time for the performers and everyone could be well remunerated. Not many, I think, hearing this record and having his mind jerked off the music four times in the course of a 10 minutes' rendering will think of buying it.

I have a very large number of records of the Columbia Company and no one is a greater admirer of the improvements they have effected recently and the splendid enterprise they have shown in the production of interesting records, and I am quite convinced that when they have appreciated the effect upon gramophone users of such a short-sided policy as "pinching the records," they will become as up-to-date in this particular as in their other departments.

I feel sure that if the players who performed the Ravel records would repeat the performance upon the two sides of one plate, the sale would recompense them.

Brighouse.

Yours faithfully,
CHAS. W. ROBERTS.

[We have had several letters on this specific case of short measure, and our reviewer has also mentioned it. But it is only fair to the Columbia Company to point out that the divisions of the Septette for recording purposes were made by M. Ravel himself; and also that on our correspondent's own showing the first two parts could not have been put on to one side. Still, 10in. records would have been cheaper.—ED.]

THE NEW COLUMBIA SURFACE

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—An old gramophonist, I was mildly interested by the Columbia Company's claim that their new surface eliminated "scratch." I had seen and heard so many records, sound-boxes and needles which claimed to reduce scratch, that I had sadly come to the conclusion that reduction of scratch could only be attained by reduction of the total volume of sound, and that in practice the better the record the louder was the surface noise. I did not hurry, therefore, to try the new-surface records; but last month I was induced to hear the records of the *Immortal Hour* and also some of the Lener string quartette. I was almost startled at the purity and clearness of the reproduction and I then realised for the first time how much we lose by the veiling of the softer passages by surface noise, however much we may have accustomed our ears to disregard the latter. I proceeded to make further trials and obtained the Mozart *Sonata in A*, the records of the *Planets*, the *Eroica Symphony*, a pianoforte record by Murdoch, and the *Ravel Septette*. In a small room with a fibre needle the records of chamber music are, I think, as near perfection as possible and surface noise is inaudible. The orchestral records played with a sympathetic chromic needle are almost as good, but I could form

no opinion as to how they would stand a loud needle in a big room. Records of chamber music have always been less satisfactory than orchestral and operatic records. They are, of course, most suitable for playing in the intimacy of the study, and at close quarters the surface noise is not only tiresome but prevents the softer passages from being distinctly heard. The new Columbia records have raised chamber music from the lowest to the highest place in gramophone music.

Where all are good, it is hard to discriminate, but I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that the *Mozart Sonata* and the *Ravel Septette* are nearer perfection than any gramophone records previously published.

Hove.

Yours faithfully,
C. S. S.

THE TWELVE BEST RECORDS

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have read with interest the two lists of favourite records which have been compiled by T. R. S. and A. B. Kebbelle (these appeared in the November and December numbers respectively) and as a gramophone lover of some considerable standing and experience I send you my own "select twelve" in the hope that it may be of some interest to other readers to compare with their own selections. I have a fairly representative record library of most of the leading makes of records, and from it have selected the following as being (at present) my twelve favourites in the order named: (1) *Il fiore che avevi a me tu dato* (Michele Fleta). I consider this record one of the very finest ever issued. (2) *Sempre libera (Ah! fors è lui)* (Galli-Curci). The 10-inch disc issued by H.M.V. of the *Allegro* alone is much better than the complete aria on the 12-inch disc. (3) *Softly Awakes my Heart*, in English (Edna Thornton). (4) *William Tell Overture (Finale)* (Sir Henry J. Wood and Orchestra). (5) *Largo al Factotum* (Rossini) (Arthur Middleton). This is an Edison "Re-creation" and cannot be played on an ordinary gramophone without a special adjustment. The price of the disc is 12s. 6d., but it is well worth it—a superb rendering and superb recording. (6) *Caprice Viennois* (Kreisler). (7) *Di tale amor che dirsi* (Tetrazzini). This air forms part of *Tacea la notte from Il Trovatore*. (8) *I Am a Roamer Bold* (Arthur Middleton). This also is an Edison "Re-creation." (9) *Ave Maria*—Gounod (Melba and Kubelik). (10) *On Wings of Song* (Heifetz). (11) *Un bel di vedremo* (Galli-Curci). Not one of Galli-Curci's "war-horses," but nevertheless a wonderful piece of singing. (12) *Adamastor! Re dell'Acque profonde* (Moritz Bremner). An old issue by the Favorite Company, now, I believe, unobtainable. In spite of much surface noise the record is still thrilling. Who is, or was, Moritz Bremner? He has a terrific voice as recorded here—one of the Titta Ruffo type!

Scarcely behind these, in my estimation, come two or three much cheaper records: De Groot (of the Piccadilly Orchestra) doing fine work in Schumann's *Träumerei*; Hughes Macklin, the Carl Rosa tenor, going strong in *All Hail, thou dwelling from Faust*; and—dare I say it?—the Great White Way Orchestra making the weirdest row in *Barney Google*! I must confess to a weakness for *Barney Google*, and also for some of those plaintive, wailing Hawaiian melodies; I have some beauties on the Edison discs. But there, I have given you my twelve—and some more, and must now apologise for writing at such length. Wishing your paper every success, believe me,

Hamilton.

Yours truly,
HUGO S. ARNOT.

THE BRUNSWICK RECORDS—AND OTHERS

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have recently added to my record library two Brunswick Cliftohone records and have derived considerable interest from comparing tonal results with those obtained by other first-class makers. The two B.C.'s in my possession are (1) *Polonaise and Ballade (Vieuxtemps)* played by Bronislaw Huberman (violin and piano 50019.B); and (2) *Pastorale and Capriccio* (Scarlatti) and *Walküre, Magic Fire Spell* (Wagner), played by Josef Hofmann (pianoforte solo 50035 A.).

In comparing the violin tone of (1) with the violin tone obtained by other makers, I find many points in favour of the Brunswick record and many points in favour of other makes. Brunswick has succeeded in giving equal volume of tone to both upper and lower registers and the tonal quality itself is, on the whole, more powerful and much more even than is the case with other makes. However, in obtaining these results, admirable, of course, in themselves, they have lost entirely the mellow roundness of tone which nearly all

other makers obtain satisfactorily, Brunswick tone being exceedingly metallic. Now I wonder whether any other of your readers have any explanation to offer. Personally, I am almost convinced that Huberman is playing a Strovioi or similar violin with which all the music emerges through a trumpet, and not through "f" holes; the result, of course, being metallic tone, compensated by evenness and clearness, with uniform volume from the top of the E string down to the open G.

In the case of the piano tone of (2) here again Brunswick is able to offer perfect equality of volume from top register down to the lowest note; but again there is something lacking in tone, which is unlike "string" tone, resembling as it does, music struck from steel bars or tubes, as is the case with the Dulcitone, the glockenspiel, or even the tubular bells. Now I am going to put forward a theory which I trust Messrs. Chappell will look upon, not as a piece of carping criticism, but in the spirit with which it is propounded. The theory is this: Are the Brunswick recording studios equipped with a mammoth piano of the Dulcitone type in order to obtain powerful tone which, when played through the tone arm and amplifying chamber of a gramophone is distorted by the acoustical peculiarities of the gramophone, until it becomes "stringy" instead of bell-like in character, and yet retains the rich volume of a first-class concert grand piano? Supposing this to be the case, how do they obtain the equality of tone? Perhaps one of your readers will put forward a theory on this point.

At the same time, I should like to ask your opinion re the storage of records. In storing records on end I have, I believe, found a tendency for the discs to warp, after standing for a couple of months, until they are slightly eccentric.

Yours faithfully,

H. CECIL SAUNDERSON.

Nottingham.

P.S.—I am a "fibre fiend" and my criticism of the Brunswick records is founded on "fibre" results heard through an H.M.V. No. 2 Sound-box.

WARPED RECORDS

(To the London Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—This week I received from Chicago a most admirable portable gramophone, about which I shall soon have something to say. As usual with portables, the turntable is for a 10in. record, but, of course, it will take a 12in. record provided that the 12in. record is absolutely true. I got out one of my albums of Galli-Curci, as I always do when any novelty arrives, and by chance put on Proch's *Air and Variations*. After listening for a moment it struck me that the variations were taking possession of the air, and I discovered that the record was warped and was therefore clicking against the side of the instrument. The next record was all right, the next four clicked. I began to choose records at random, and I found that about 60 per cent. clicked. Why should some records warp and not others? Mine are all kept in the same way. The worst is yet to come. I picked up the Proch record to see where it was warped, and though I pressed it very lightly it broke in half, which put me in a damnable temper. I hope, Sir, that you will take the earliest possible opportunity to prefer a strong indictment against the recording companies on this count. In order to pay for a record of Galli-Curci I have to sell four copies of a novel, and I think I deserve one that is not warped. Suppose you were a warped critic?

Your obedient Servant,

Isle of Jethou,
C.I.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

IS THERE A BEST SOUND-BOX?

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I wonder if there really is such a thing as a best sound-box? Although I think that your correspondent H. F. V. L. was correct with regard to the possibilities of the small exhibition box, the fact is usually lost sight of in interminable discussions as to which is the best, that practically every well-known type of sound-box can, by suitable adjustment, be made to give nearly equally beautiful, though slightly different, approximations to perfect reproduction.

It is well known that although a fair result can be obtained cheaply by routine methods, a superlative result (occasional good fortune apart) is costly. It demands not only much time and skill but also exceptionally suitable diaphragm and gaskets, with very extended tests on all kinds of music. It is, in short, impossible to judge any type of box by a chance sample, for though each type

has its well marked characteristics, the perfectly adjusted box of almost any type will easily prove to the man in the street that every other type is dud by comparison.

Apparently exaggerated prices are asked for some reproducers, presumably to pay for this fine adjustment; but the average result is hardly better than the result obtained by mass production, though this should not be so. There are exceptions, however.

My own preference, like that of your correspondent, is for a re-adjusted No. 1 Exhibition box, although I believe that the No. 2 box can be more readily adjusted to a good commercial average.

A considerable time ago Mr. J. Randall, of Observatory, Cape, South Africa, sent me a large box for 60 mm. mica, with springs similar to the "Exhibition," but with a vulcanite back. When suitably adjusted it was remarkable for the extended scale of tone at which it was effective, while in the basses it was a revelation. I thought the box was to be mine, but it was sent for adjustment only. It stimulated my experiments. I copied it with only moderate success, but by continued experiment I equalled it in the lower register, and beat it in the higher with superior definition by means of a W.S.A. made and numbered "Exhibition." While it is nearly as difficult to obtain basses true to tone on the small box as to obtain the upper notes of the violin or soprano true to tone with the big boxes, yet it can be done, and when obtained without sacrifice at the other end of the scale, the result in definition and all round beauty is a joy. I succeeded fairly well with medium diaphragmed boxes; in particular with the Regal and an old Coliseum, and better still with an H.M.V. Exhibition and a gilt copy of the latter. Each type of box required different treatment, but the essentials for perfecting the small Exhibition box are: a fairly thin, sound, and flat mica, soft, small, and first-class rubber gaskets, a very minimum gasket pressure, and a minimum and exactly equal spring pressure. This, of course, is sailing pretty close to the wind, as it were; and even if disaster is avoided in the way of blasting or tubbiness, much patience, a good ear, and many re-adjustments are required for success. Once adjusted with perfect range, volume and definition, such a box, in spite of its apparent slackness, stands up to hard wear exceedingly well, and does not deteriorate. Fibres with it give a result as good as the Columbia Ideal needle, and records improve with such a combination. Steel so quickly deteriorates some records that good boxes are blamed for revealing defects that bad boxes mask. I do not use an adaptor for fibres as the balance of the stylus bar is upset by such a contrivance, while reproduction is weakened and impaired. Moreover, the triangular slot is no detriment as with it a steel needle is firmly held on three sides compared with only two in the round hole. There are, however, many amateurs not so poverty-stricken as myself to whom the cost of record renewals is a bagatelle, to them the bother of fibres makes no appeal; but there are also others.

A final word. Although I have been most successful with the Exhibition type, here again there are others. In the course of my experiments many times have the larger diaphragmed boxes taken the palm, and if now the last word appears to be with the Exhibition, it may be only temporarily. Others with more skill may probe further the secrets of other boxes, for there are many beautifully made instruments on the market. I feel that it is rather the reproducing point and its effect on the record that is the Achilles heel of the gramophone. When that point is made fool-proof, and wear-proof, and permanent, the sound-box problem is solved, for boxes need no longer be deliberately dulled in order to hide the effects of wear, and the road to perfection is made plain to all.

Yours sincerely,

F. C. WATTS.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A Jewel Sound-box with Nom-y-ka Diaphragm from Messrs. Murdoch, Murdoch & Co.

* * *

A Pianina and a Cronacoustic sound-box from the Gramophone Exchange.

* * *

"Gramophone Tips, 1924" from Capt. H. T. Barnett.

* * *

Three "Everplay" needles from Messrs. Ellis and Sutherland.

* * *

Another Laughing Record, the best of the four that we have heard so far, from the Imperial Disc Record people.

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The wonderful testimonial by the late

SIR TOLLEMACHE SINCLAIR, BART.

which we hold, and the weighty words of Capt. H. T. Barnett, M.I.E.E., are the result of tests made with the "Murdoch" Petmecky.

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COMPARISON TESTS OF PETMECKY GRAMOPHONE NEEDLES.

Portsmouth, October, 1922.—Having seen an illustration of the PETMECKY needle in the September Issue of the "Sound Wave," and having been much impressed with what in my opinion is its theoretically correct conformation, and wishing to test it thoroughly against the needle I was at that time using I did so in the following manner:—I wished FIRST to see what were the tone characteristics (volume and definition) of the two needles; SECONDLY, did they differ in production of surface noise? THIRDLY, did they differ, and if so to what extent, in the damage done to the record. All the tests were made on the same gramophone having a very light tone arm and aluminium soundbox. The angle of the needle was 45 degrees. The revolutions at no time exceeded 78 per minute. In the FIRST test TONE—both needles being used under precisely similar conditions on the same record, it was found that for volume the PETMECKY needle gave the greater, and I estimate the amount of increase at approximately 20 per cent.; and for Definition the PETMECKY needle gave much greater precision and clearness in the pianissimo and in rapid passages. It was also noticed subsequently on a record of many tone characteristics that these differed more fully and were nearer to the instrumental tone with the PETMECKY needle than with the other needle. In the SECOND test SURFACE NOISE.—With a new record there was not much difference between the two needles, but what difference there was, was in favour of the PETMECKY by an amount I estimate at 15 per cent. With a worn record, however, the difference was largely in favour of the PETMECKY, which sounded more like a sapphire in contact with the record. In the THIRD test—WEAR ON RECORD. An easily destructible record, was taken. Several were tried and one was selected having precisely similar characteristics on both sides. One kind of needle was used for each side and each side was run thirty times, the gramophone motor being full wound between all the runnings. With my regular needles (each used once only), harmonics were showing on the higher notes at the third running. At the thirteenth running there were harmonics all over the scale and rattle on many of the notes. At the twentieth running, rattle was pretty general over the whole surface and so far as my ear is concerned, the record was quite finished. When taken off the machine after thirty runnings the surface showed general brownness. With the PETMECKY needles each used five times at the position of maximum tone and turned half round after each running, not until the fifth running did harmonics begin to appear.

HARRY T. BARNETT, M.I.E.E.

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